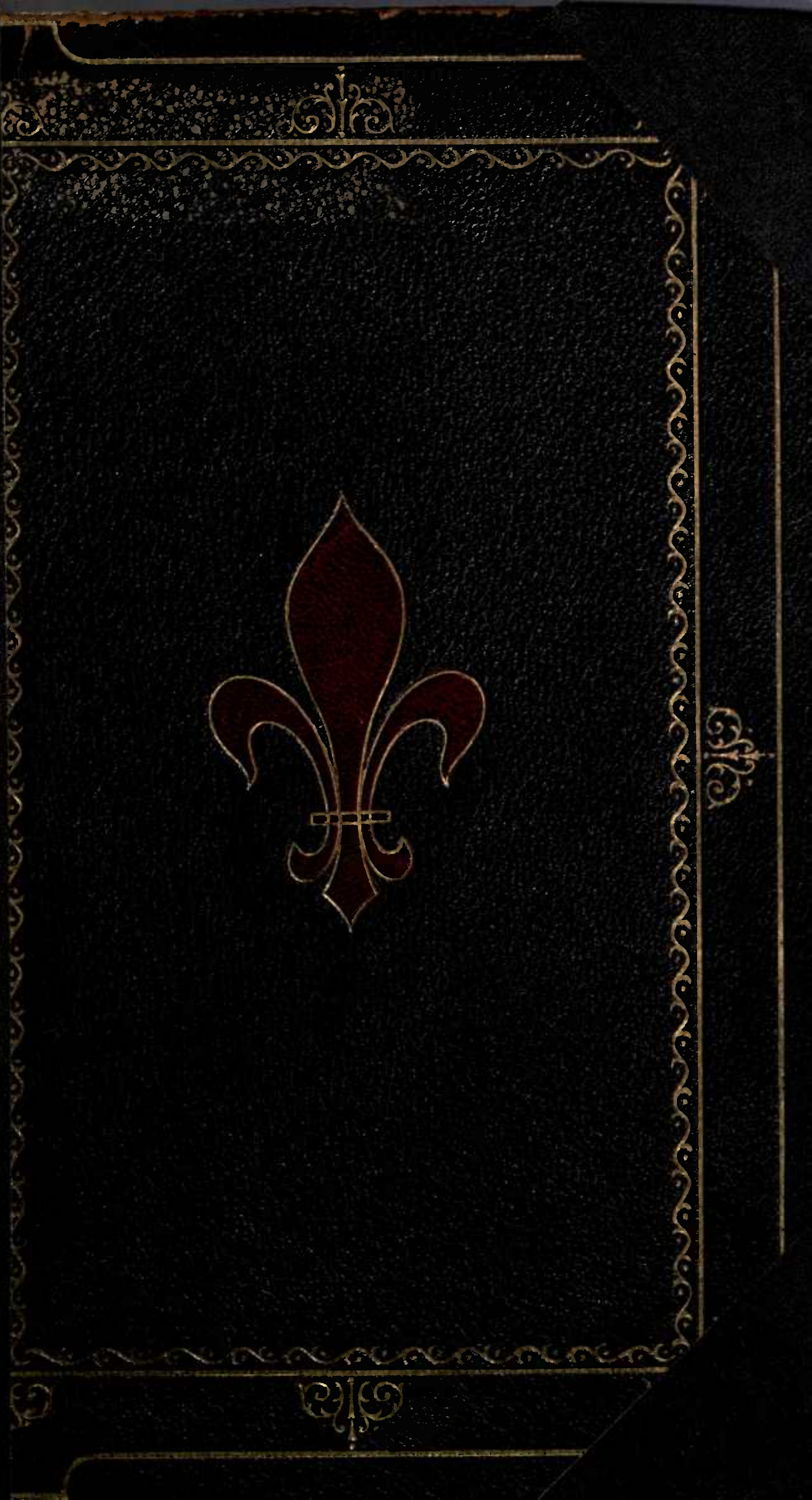

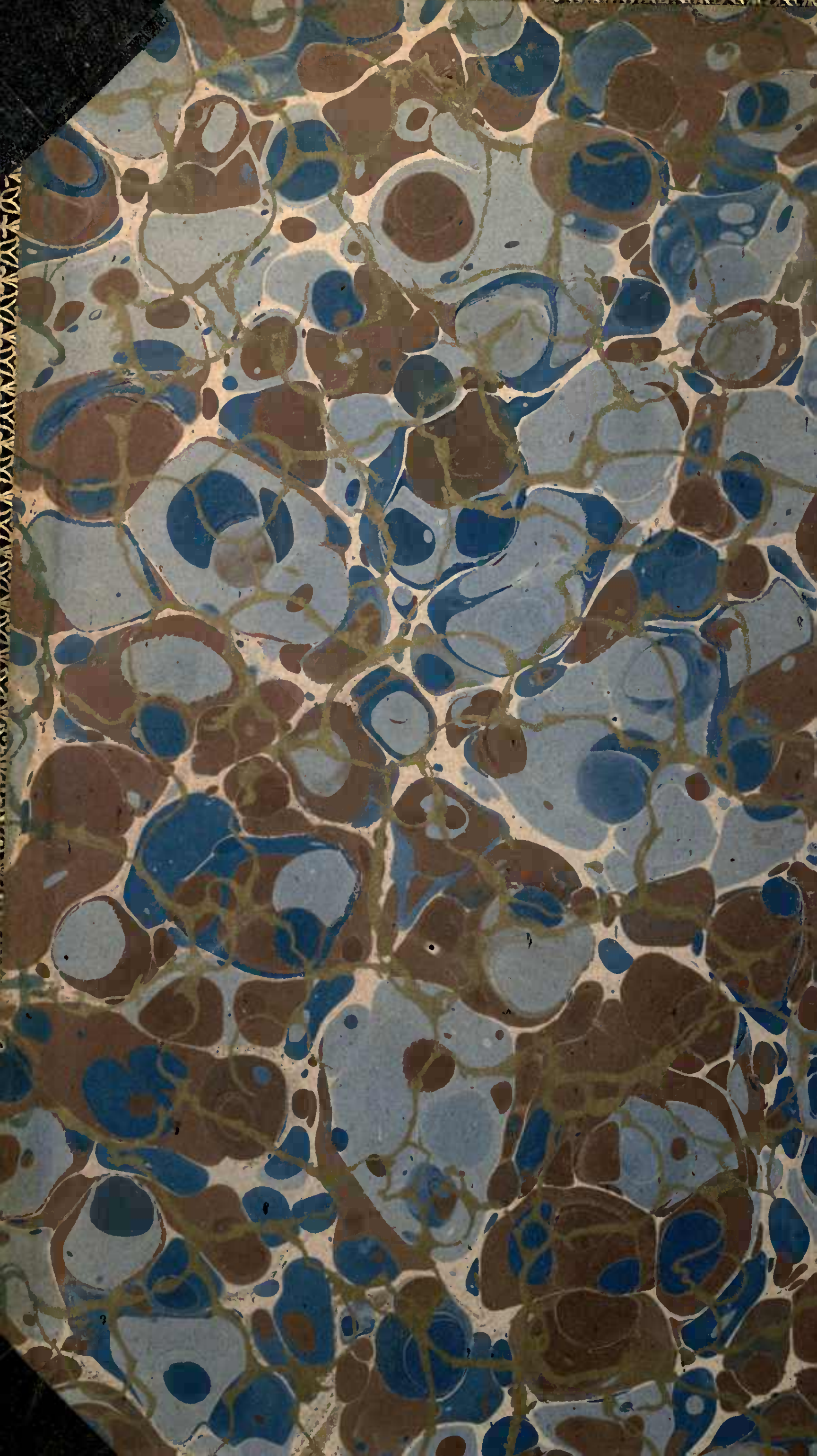

H GRAY

Courtiers and Favourites of Royalty

ILLUSTRATED

Memoirs of Duke de Richelieu

In Three Volumes

Volume Two

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MARSHAL DUKE DE RICHELIEU

BY
M. F. BARRIERE

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THE Sulpicians, whom Fleury favored very strongly, had formed a plan, in their house at Issy, to deprive parliament of all knowledge of ecclesiastical affairs. The storm passed, but parliament was attacked by the stirring up of party spirit and threatening it with appeals to the royal council which awakened its sensitiveness. The Abbé Pucelle, parliament's celebrated orator, driven to despair, induced parliament to remonstrate against these irregularities and the prohibition to discuss these questions. In order to humiliate the councilors, whom a woman regent had formerly called the *Canaille*, the king was told that only presidents would be received by him for the purpose of hearing remonstrances, which statement gave rise to other debates. Finally parliament was ordered to be silent in regard to the Bull, to no longer discuss the question, and the chancellor even dared to say that he would appeal all affairs of this nature to the council of the king, because parliament was deciding them contrary to the well-known laws of the state. This threw parliament into such a state of excitement and vexation that Abbé Pucelle, in his scathing and eloquent discourse against despotism, even told Fleury that he had brought up the king wrongly, that he had imbued him with principles false to the laws of the land. The last period of a tyrant's power is when he forbids deliberations and when he attempts to subject all the orders of the state to the ecclesiastical body. Finally Pucelle aroused the magistracy so thoroughly that, in order to bring consternation to the conspiracy of Issy and to throw it, in its turn, into the greatest perplexity, he revoked all the ancient principles relative to the government of the clergy in France. Parliament at once drew up the famous articles which we herewith give, establishing the limits of the two powers.

"*First.* The temporal power, established directly by divine power, is independent of every other power, and no other power can be in the least prejudicial to its authority.

"*Second.* It does not belong to the prerogatives of the ministers of the church to establish the limits which God has placed between the two powers; the canons of the church only become laws of the state in so far as they are clothed with the authority of the sovereign.

"*Third.* The external jurisdiction has the prerogative to constrain subjects of the king and belongs to the temporal power alone.

"*Fourth.* The ministers of the church are responsible to the king and to the court, under his authority, for all infringements upon the laws of state.

"*Fifth.* The audiences, edicts, rules, decrees of the court over the authority of our king, will be executed according to their form and tenor, and the present resolutions shall be read, published, posted, etc."

These maxims were those of the Church of France, and Abbé Pucelle maintained the royal authority there against the usurpations of the priests; but, nevertheless, the next day the ministry by a decree in council annulled the resolution of parliament, declaring it of no effect and ordering it to be stricken out. After this resolution and after its annulment in the council of the king, parliament had its recess. Maurepas, on its reassembling, carried a letter from the king to this body. The agitation was still so great that they refused to hear its reading and would not even open it, invoking the principle which forbids *d'obtemperer aux lettres closes.* (Complying with secret commands.) The king ordered the premier president to find means of having this sealed letter opened and read in parliament. The premier president, as a matter fact, appeared in the assembly to beg them to allow this sealed letter of the king to be read. It was not read.

The people of the king's party brought another, which ordered the members of parliament to open the first one under penalty of being regarded as rebels. This extreme act threw parliament into the greatest excitement.

"It is very sad," said Pucelle, "to find ourselves between two hidden rocks, the failure to obey the king, and dereliction to duty. The pleasure of obeying the king, the fear of being disagreeable to him, the tender love for his person, everything inclines us to obedience; but when obedience leads us to do something contrary to the interests of the king himself, it degenerates into a false respect and then fidelity should take the upper hand and blaze the way for us. The menaces with which we are threatened are far from intimidating me, but increase, arouse and strengthen my zeal and courage. The king is master of my fortune, master of my wealth, and of my liberty; but of all the punishments that he can impose upon me there is none that can force me to betray my duty by violating the oath which I have taken, nor is there any punishment that can compel me to be silent when his interests are at stake, nor any that can prevent me from placing myself between him and harm. What the first president ought to represent to the king is to trace in advance all those courageous addresses of La Vacquerie and of Le Jay. How could such an action displease the king? What do we ask of him? The privilege of living as honest men, of dying in peace; the right to live faithful to his service, to our fatherland, to our duty, to our oaths and to our holy liberties; and, after having lived a hard, painful, laborious life, to die in peace. But this is what we are refused." He ended his address by proposing to go to Marly and to make complaint to the king in a body.

The Abbé Pucelle, encouraging his whole company by these words, and the first president seeing parliament ready to leave for Marly to plead with the king, called to their attention the dangerous consequences of such an action. Abbé Pucelle told the president that parliament was only following the precedents of La Vacquerie and Le Jay in so doing. These men had immortalized themselves in 1480 and in 1626 respectively. The debates lasted two hours and were on the subject of the advisability of visiting Marly or not. The first president spoke of the necessity of opening the letter of the king and the members would not consent to it until he had given his promise that he would march at the head of the company. He offered to go to Marly alone and plead with the king in behalf of parliament, and the members replied that since he thought such an action was perilous, they wanted to share the danger with him. The premier president consented to it after two hours' hesitation, and a resolution was adopted at once, to complain of the abuse made of the order of the king. They then opened the sealed letter of the night before. In it the king prohibited all deliberation on the limitations of the two powers, under pain of incurring his displeasure.

Having arrived at Marly at an hour when the king was about to retire, the first president sent Dufranc, secretary of the court, to the Duke de Trésmes, first chamberlain, to notify him that parliament wished to speak to the king.

The Duke de Trésmes descended, and the first president told him that parliament desired the honor of saluting the king and begged him to notify His Majesty.

While waiting, the Duke de Noailles, who had hurried to the scene, in order to be a witness, said to parliament that this vestibule was neither a suitable nor a proper place for them, and told them to enter the grand hall and had ordered a fire and candles lighted.

But the Duke de Trésmes came after a quarter of an hour's delay and announced that he regretted extremely the necessity of announcing a refusal to comply with their wishes. He said that the king did not wish to receive his parliament and that he ordered it to return to Paris at once. Parliament made a second attempt and the Duke de Trésmes replied that the order of the king was such that he could not speak to him the second time concerning it.

Fleury, d'Aguesseau and Maurepas, now arrived. They were excited at such an unwonted journey, and the cardinal, addressing the first president, cried out: "Ah! sir, at Marly, sir! Oh, Heavens, you have come to Marly to speak to the king?"

The president replied that he had received no command not to go to Marly but only not to deliberate; and the cardinal, then turning to Abbé Pucelle, had good faith enough to tell him, personally, that he was angry with him because of the address he made in parliament. Pucelle told him that he had only uttered the truth which conscience and honor had dictated. "Nevertheless I honor," said the cardinal, "the parliament of Paris." "It is indeed very apparent," replied Pucelle, "that you are very friendly to that body for it has never been vilified until your ministry. For all time history will reproach your memory for it, and it will be recalled that under your government parliament could not see the king as a body."

This shameful, unworthy government, led by the priest, Fleury, meditated the use of military power to intimidate this parliament which declared, as was its duty, the line of demarkation between temporal and ecclesiastical power.

The return of the assembly to Paris and its meeting there were formidable. The first president offered parliament to go and plead with the king personally, to inform him of the sorrow of his parliament at not being able to get a hearing from the throne. They spoke of calling the princes and the peers, and Abbé Pucelle cited the examples of 1625, 1645, and 1667, well-known times when the magistracy had called on the king without being sent for; but he added that at that time they were not governed by a cardinal "beset," said he, "by the cohort surrounding him, and reinforced by M. d'Aguesseau and M. de Chauvelin, both of them keepers of the seals and scholars of this body. The premiers," he added, "have with us sustained the principles for which we are contending, and both of them to-day announce maxims which are opposed to their former contentions."

He afterwards added that to prohibit parliamentary discussions and remonstrances was to destroy parliament and to reduce it to the state of a blind and passive tool of the king's ministers. Said he: "It is neither out of ill-humor nor animosity towards M. the Cardinal that I am speaking. I respect him and I love him, but I do not fear him; I regard him as a man controlled by this party that surrounds him and follows his every footstep. I am therefore of the opinion, that it is best to commission the first president to go and represent to the king, on behalf of this body, the impossibility of fulfilling its functions as long as it is not able to reconcile its duties of fidelity and obedience, and to commission him to go and ask for an audience for parliament."

The king, the ministers, and especially the cardinal, were in the greatest embarrassment. Parliament said it was ready to give up all its functions, since they forbade its deliberation, and continued to affirm that the body, whose principal function is deliberating and discussing, is no more than a useless machine when this power has been taken from it. The ministry, still more embarrassed, promised a declaration favorable to parliament on the subject of the powers of parliament and the clergy, but it persisted in the prohibition to deliberate, and Pucelle, who believed that a parliament which cannot discuss is but a body without a soul, insisted on its dissolution. Then, giving full vent to the feelings of his soul, with tears in his eyes, he thus addressed the two assemblies: "To see from our seats the conflagration spreading in every direction, seizing upon the palace, upon the throne of our kings, and to be not only powerless to act against the incendiaries, but even powerless to deliberate on the means of extinguishing it; to see at the foot of the tribunal, religious communities dispersed, individuals despoiled, living and dead crying for justice and for the laws of which we are the depositories, and not to be able to extend a hand in succor, to see ourselves degraded, annihilated, for it is depriving us of our being when we are forbidden to deliberate, is not this separating the soul from the body, is it not reducing to the impossibility of satisfying its obligations? it is a sad situation, not to be able to fulfil one's duties without either falling into the crime of disobedience, or attracting to oneself threats of the difference of the king. The ministers declare peace unto us, and promising it, they deprive us of it. After having dispersed legislative bodies and virtuous citizens; after having thrown them into prison like criminals; after having separated the father from his children; innocent nuns from their communities, pious ecclesiastics from their subjects; after having exiled them to foreign lands without council, without defenders; and after all these violences to treat the magistrates, their born protectors, like criminals guilty of high treason, like heretics, like non-conformers, is not this the climax of violation of power? The council of the king judges us without hearing us. We speak, and they deny us the right of speech; we deliberate and they threaten us. What peace is it that the council of the king wishes to give us? No, I cannot keep silent when I see the council of the king undertaking that which will destroy peace and annihilate this body. What is there for us to do in this deplorable situation we do not inform the king of the impossibility of existing as a parliamentary body without the right to discuss; and consequently the impossibility of continuing our functions?"

Parliament, thoroughly aroused by this address sent the first president. The king did not wish to receive him. He wrote, and was not granted a reply; the Abbé Pucelle, still more aroused, said that the ministers were affecting to embitter minds by the exile of the most virtuous men, and wished to prevent the court from deliberating on its acts of authority. The first president closed the session, and left when these delicate questions were taken up. Nevertheless he went to supplicate and to plead with Fleury to make smooth his mediation, and to enable parliament to treat with the king. "It is useless," said the cardinal, "if you wish to speak with him on matters of public import." From sheer weariness, parliament again allowed the differences to rest in a state of quietude.

Everything seemed to have reached the state of tranquillity, when, in the month of January, the king sent for parliament by deputies. On their arrival, Maurepas came and said to them, in the second antechamber, that the king forbade all, and especially the first president, to address him when he ceased to speak to them.

They were therefore introduced and placed like automatons before this royal phantom, which they found seated in his chamber, and surrounded by the Duke of Orleans, by the Chancellor d'Aguesseau, by the keeper of the seals, De Chauvelin, by Fleury, and by several nobles who were present. The king, who held his address, remained covered while reading it. He said that the chancellor would explain his intentions, and d'Aguesseau added: "All the conduct and the doings of parliament are irregular and indecent; the orders of the king must make you feel how irritated his majesty is. He orders me to tell you that all that you have done is declared null and is repealed, as contrary to the obedience due him; his majesty forbids all assemblies to deliberate, and he will regard as rebels and as disobedient those who frustrate his orders.

"The king knows the whole extent of the rights of supreme power; he will prevent it from being violated. The most inviolable of the maxims of royal authority is that it shall never suffer acts of disobedience. The king orders you to insert into the records what he has told you through me."

D'Aguesseau having spoken thus, the king added: "This is my will; do not force me to make you feel that I am your master." The premier president in consternation replied: "We are forbidden even to explain to the king the extremity of our sorrow." A profound reverence befitting an automaton was made; the members of parliament dispersed and the scene passed off satisfactorily to the Court of Versailles.

The Archbishop of Paris, sometime afterward, issued an order in which the liberties of the Gallican church were compromised. Twenty-two curates of Paris refused to announce it to the people. He was denounced in parliament, the king again forbade its members to busy themselves with these affairs without his permission. Robert made a very ingenius speech concerning it which caused the whole assembly to roar with laughter during the debate. "How do you expect us," said he, "to obey the king, who forbids us to deliberate on ecclesiastical affairs without informing him in regard to it. Can we ever inform his majesty without a preliminary deliberation, and is it not absolutely true that in order to be able to inform the king concerning a subject, this body must necessarily deliberate. Therefore we shall never cease to speak and to deliberate, for it is impossible for us to keep silence."

"We see well," added Pucelle, "that the only thing that remains for us to do is to carry our heads to the king. He is the master of our wealth and of our life, but not of my conscience. Can we coolly look on while the enemies of peace are ravaging the diocese of Paris?" He said that he would never keep silence while seeing these evils threatening France.

The president replied that such was the will of the king and that he must submit. Dupré, another councilor, said that the president only had one vote like the others, and that the verbal order of the king was no stronger than the letters of royal command against which this body had made repeated remonstrances. The president, not wishing to yield, was heaped with bitter reproaches. He was called infamous for his abandonment of the council. "Never," said one of the councilors, "will you be any greater than when you are at the head of your confrères; they will scorn you at court, if you abandon us, but if this body perishes, you will win glory in perishing at the head of it." Finally the councilors, who belonged to the upper chamber, declared that they would do no work until they had deliberated on the conduct of the Archbishop of Paris. The next day the audience was held in the upper chamber where a *lettre de cachet* was received ordering the two chambers to assemble. The inquisition did not wish to open it until after the opening debate. The king sent for the parliament by deputies; and when the president was asked what he would say to the king: "I must also know what the king, himself, will say to us," he replied. "That is not difficult to guess," said Titon; "but you should reply as the first president replied to De Verden in 1626 on a like occasion. He said that as the question was concerning religion, the security of his person and of his state, he ought not to attribute it to disobedience if he could not defer to the orders of the king." Dupré then added that they should declare that parliament would not continue its functions, as it had been despoiled of the most essential part of its duty, that of speaking; and that this rule of Fleury's savored too much of the rule of silence in the Seminaries of Saint-Sulpice to be complied with.

They listened to the counsel of all, and then by a unanimous vote decreed that the first president should present this address to the king. If the king ordered him not to speak, through a minister, no attention should be paid to such an order; if the king himself prohibited him from speaking, he should leave these words of Verden in writing at the foot of the throne. From that day on all business ceased in the palace and even the lawyers refused to plead.

The king, notified of all these resolutions, received parliament with great pomp, surrounded by M. le Duc, the Duke de Clermont, the Duke du Maine, the Count de Toulouse, the Prince Dombes, the Count d'Eu, de Fleury, d'Aguesseau, Chauvelin, Villars, Charost and Maurepas. This retinue of valets, sold to his arbitrary orders, was an indication of the natural weakness of arbitrary power.

"I have informed you of my will," said the king, "I desire that it be fully executed. I forbid all deliberation. What you have done deserves my anger; be more dutiful and return at once to your proper employment.

The premier president making a profound reverence wished to speak. "Silence," thundered the king. At once Abbé Pucelle, seeing that the first president would not carry out the resolution of parliament, threw himself on his knees before Louis XV., drew from his pocket a resolution of parliament, and placed it very respectfully at the feet of the king. Maurepas picked it up, tore it in pieces and threw the bits on the ground, between the disputants.

The deputies of parliament returning to Paris, Fleury thought himself outraged by such resistance and the ministers, being irritated at the boldness of Pucelle, who dared to write to the king when he was forbidden to speak, had recourse to arbitrary power. They sent La Plane, brigadier of the body-guard and two royal guardsmen to arrest Abbé Pucelle at Senlis. They captured him and took him to Corbigny. "Tell Fleury," said he to the satellites who arrested him, "that this is a tyrannical action." Notwithstanding their bold action the ministers feared the Parisians, for Abbé Pucelle enjoyed a general and well-merited esteem in the capitol, but Fleury said to Maurepas: "Write a song to amuse the City of Paris and joke about the word 'Pucelle' and all will be well." Maurepas wrote a song fairly surpassing himself; he placed the recalcitrant Pucelle's name in the mouth of the market-women and street gamins who sang these famous couplets, the refrain of which has never been forgotten.

"Rendev-nous Pucelle, O guai!
Rendev-nous Pucelle."

From the street this song reached the ladies of the court and for several months it was constantly sung in derision of a man, who was the victim of his own courage and patriotism.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Religious dissensions.—The frivolity of the French people.—Fashionable games.—A song about Fleury.—Inquisition directed against some of the ecclesiastics.

After this recital of the quarrels of the theologians; after this picture of the hatred of the Jesuits and the Sulpicians against Port-Royal, against the Oratorio and against all talents; after these struggles between court and parliament; is there any one who can disapprove of a history abridged by the omission of such sickness of the human mind tormented and moved by so many quarrels? But we can still show the effects of these debates; we can tell all the Jesuits and all the Sulpicians that during these scandalous quarrels a third party arose, composed of strong minds, enlightened, impartial and philosophical, who made sport of these disputes, deplored these exiles, and prepared the way for that revolution which was to burst upon France toward the end of the ministry of the cardinal. By demanding a blind obedience to the objects of faith and tolerating an openly licentious life in the church, religion was destroyed, root and branch. Montesquieu was already meditating in his *Lettres Persanes;* Voltaire was making sport of her; Diderot was about to appear on the stage of literature, and d'Argens was heaping ridicule and sarcasm on religion and its ministers. The petty and obscure jealousy of

Sulpicianism drove great minds from the church. Polignac was at Rome or at Auch, Massillon was at Clermont, and in Paris the only topic of conversation was these unhappy quarrels. The noble century of Louis XIV. had passed away; the church was nourishing its true enemies in its own bosom. The Jansenists, who by their practical and theoretical system of morals, could honor the church and make it beloved, or at least respected, had been dispersed, exiled or imprisoned. Such, therefore, was the effect of the reign of Sulpicianism in France. But luckily this party was not able to introduce religious inquisition into the realm as thoroughly as it wished.

Unfortunately the character of the French, too pliant or indifferent in turning serious things into jest, was susceptible to any new impression however trivial it might be on account of the general inconstancy of minds, and the lack of a national purpose.

From 1728 every one was amused by a most peculiar diversion. Ladies, nobles, abbots, even princes, were occupied with a work which almost turned the heads of all. They cut out all the engravings from books; and engravers, designers and artists were employed to make new cuts.

Public hatred, also, was prone to sing disrespectful songs of Fleury and as, for half a century, they had sung the song of Barnaba they applied it to him. It received such favor that New Year's gifts, fashions and head-dresses were for three years *en bequilles*. Confectionery, presents, curls, fashions, all were in imitation of these crutches of Father Barnaba. The famous song was written on dessert plates; it was sung at banquets, and the charlatans who traversed the streets set their song *en bequilles*. The cardinal was sung of in homes; scandalous couplets were aimed at him. Sometimes after that, muffs, a la Girard and fashions a la Cadière, were the rule. Our nation like an amiable child, laughed at everything. It sang about its ministers, its kings, its misfortunes, even its calamities, in the same indifferent tone; the only reflecting body in the country was the Jesuits, and, with the throne, they were planning, in advance, the destruction of the parliament which had resisted them in 1732. As the climax of indifference, riddles were invented which seriously occupied all societies after dinner.

The inquisition not being able to establish itself legally in France, the Jesuitical and Sulpician spirit, which was to cause so many disasters under Christophe de Beaumont, made new treaties with the police.

The very name of parliament caused the Jesuits to go into convulsions. On the other hand the name of the police seemed pleasant and agreeable to them. D'Argenson the elder, and afterward Herault, had found support in this ecclesiastical society. The celebrated Sartine, in alliance with Beaumont, the sworn enemy of parliaments, likewise found a support in the Jesuits and they were mutually united in interests and in needs.

The Jansenists accused the Molinists of having neither morals nor customs. The Molinists, in reality more sensual than the Jansenists, expended a great deal of ecclesiastical wealth in pleasure and amusements, but at the same time regretted seeing itself accused in this manner by those who were firm, stubborn and proud. Finally Beaumont established an inquisition over the customs of both factions, and in alliance with the lieutenant of police he executed the orders of his arbitrary will, while the lieutenant-general of police, in turn, gave them to each one of his commissaries, who gave them to every prostitute of the capital.

It was ordered that the latter should distinguish well a prelate, a priest, an abbot, from a layman and call the nearest commissary when they could seize an ecclesiastic and especially a prelate. And that these unfortunate ones might be caught if they violated the law a reward was offered for every bit of incriminating evidence against them.

They were ordered not to *repulse*, but to *encourage*, an ecclesiastic, curate or prelate, for the object of all this was that they might be dismissed. Therefore they were to summon the nearest commissioner of police, who, followed by his satellites, was to immediately come and surprise the guilty man in his crime and draw up an indictment against him signed by the witnesses and by the participants. At once the indictment was brought to the police. From the police, a copy was sent to the prelate, where the conventical decided whether the trial should take place before the bishop of the diocese, whether the guilty one should be pardoned on account of his zeal for the Bull, or whether he should be excluded from ecclesiastical grace.

Some of the frightful records of the crimes of this ministerial and sacerdotal inquisition are still extant, but they cease to be found about the time when Sartine left the police to direct French naval affairs.

To what a state of degeneration had our religious and political institutions fallen! Behold the high clergy, who detest parliament, associating with the police to get their aid in these operations of an infamous inquisition! Behold a clergy whose position of honor should have led it to abhor vice, descending to the point of proving its shame with the most disgusting and the filthiest details!

The day that the Bastille was seized, the removal of the archives brought to light the records of this inquisition in another way, and gave the people a knowledge of the details of the unholy and monstrous union of the clergy of Paris with the former police. Living prelates, grand vicars, curates, Jansenists, Molinists, have seen there public confessions certified to by the police. And a publisher, in 1791, in a work entitled *La Chastete de clerge devoilée*, has given all the infamous details. Let us stop here. The indignation of a Tacitus could not adequately deal with the degeneration of the clergy of France. We shall finish this chapter by observing that the priests of the ancient regime, the founders of our former customs, who for so long a time outraged nature in the public houses of education and dishonored French morals, were in just as great opposition to human liberty, as they were to the holy institution of marriage.

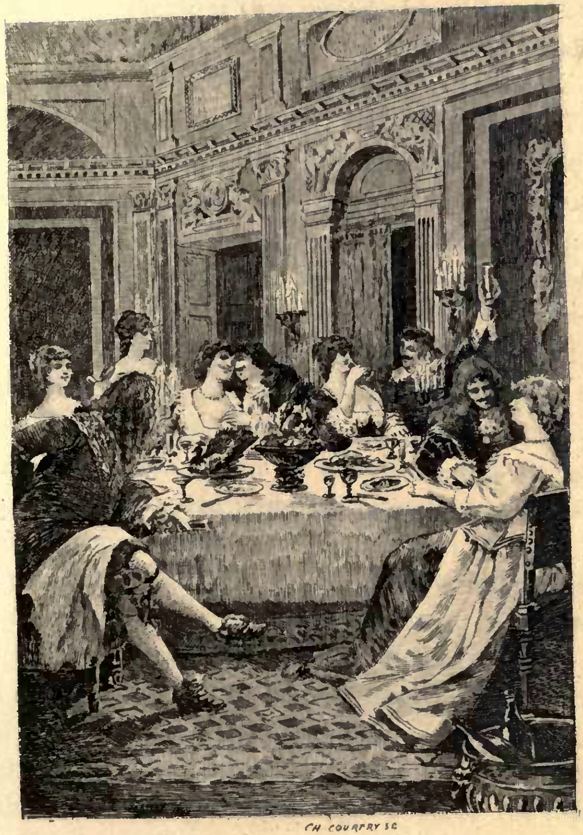
The hypocritical and lascivious celibates of the clergy, who forced the people of the North to embrace reform as they forced the revolutionists of 1789 to sell the property of the priesthood, called the lonely condition of the priests virtue, and the natural conjugal bond, libertinism. The revolution came to re-establish the rights of which outraged nature had been dispossessed. There arose a wall of separation between the institutions of hypocrisy and tyranny and the institutions of nature, and for the honor of France, be it hoped, that nature will win. (We allow these lines to remain because they were written by a married priest, their own violence robs them of all effect, and because Abbé Sullavie has made a striking disavowal of them by his deep repentance: EDITOR.)

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Character of King Louis XV. from the time of his majority to the time of the death of Cardinal de Fleury.—His bashfulness.—His love of quiet life.—His natural apathy.—Beginnings of his famous suppers in the small dining-room.—He accustoms all his courtiers to abject submission.—The distinction between the different receptions in his apartments.—After his twentieth year an entire absence of feelings of affection is noticed in him.—He writes to his former governess to prove to her that he was naturally tender-hearted.—Character of Queen Maria, his wife.—She loses credit at court.—Cardinal de Fleury deprives all her favorites of favors.—The anecdote of the one hundred louis offered by the cardinal that she might play cavagnole after she had given to the poor all her ready money.—Anecdote of Cardinal de Nangis, her favorite.

COLDNESS and timidity characterized the nature of young Louis XV. He scarcely realized that he was King of France, and showed the greatest reserve to all those of his court with whom he did not have personal relations. Again, he avoided interviews with the superior officers of the army, with men who had the reputation of eminent merit, and with people of extraordinary talents. The young king, to be sure, accorded them his esteem, but he did not admire them. He avoided young courtiers of his own age who had ardent passions, fleeing from those who had great brilliancy, and already appeared embarrassed at the burden and the pomp of royalty. Fearing everything that was great or powerful in his realm, he did not reveal his character except

A LITTLE SUPPER
ETCHED BY CH. COURTRY



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towards a very few of the courtiers of his age, whose habits of life he knew thoroughly.

It was very difficult at that period of his life to obtain his favor, but he who was successful enough to obtain it was certain to retain it. The abuse of his confidence was the only cause that would bring about disgrace. Then the unfortunate courtier, who was deprived of his kindness, could never recover it. In his first loves, still unseen by his courtiers, and a long time before the declaration made in favor of the Countess Mailly, the same character was noted in him. He very readily became displeased with transient mistresses who were secretly procured for him, and he never became reconciled with them after one disagreement; he received them all coolly, without examination, having more regard for their mind and character than for their form. He permitted himself to be caressed by them, but made no advancement in turn.

The passions of the king, lacking energy, did not forecast anything dangerous to the observers of that period of his life. This tranquillity, with which the king regarded good and evil, truth and falsehood, was regarded as prudence. Because his heart became readily attached to goodness and had a natural penchant for that which is right, the French, so prone to augur good of the future reigns of their young monarchs, saw only good qualities in Louis XV., and did not foresee anything dangerous to France. They made an idol of him, and did not imagine that the lack of energy in his soul, the indifferent affections of his heart, and his easy-going disposition, which they called kindness, would one day make his most praiseworthy qualities useless. This happened when ministers, mistresses, adroit favorites, perverted them to govern the French kingdom at their will.

It was at his suppers that the king first began to lose those good qualities with which nature endowed him. Young nobles at first induced him to go to the hunt with them, and he finally became passionately fond of this diversion. Exquisite suppers and rare wines repaired the fatigues of the day, and the guests of the king were multiplied to such an extent that Cardinal de Fleury, his preceptor, who had succeeded in mastering him, required that those who had hunted with him should not always have the honor of remaining to dine. After this new rule the hunters, who wished to be admitted to the table of the king, entered the room of the king, if they had access; if not, they remained in the chamber leading from this room, whither the king went a moment to honor them with a short visit and make out a list of those whom he wished to invite. The usher read a list of the names in the presence of the hunters, who remained standing and in silence, awaiting the decision of the king. Some were admitted, but a greater number of them were dismissed.

Louis XV., who subjected his most intimate courtiers to these rules and to this uncertainty, soon was so scrupulously jealous of having the prerogative of granting or refusing these little favors, that one day, having accepted a sheep presented to him by Crillon, which came from our southern provinces where the flesh of this animal is extremely excellent, this courtier was invited to hunt with the prince. But he determined not to invite Crillon to help eat the sheep which was prepared in the most edible style. He neglected, even, to tell him that it was good. This anecdote was soon spread throughout the capital and acquainted the courtiers with the fact that the king demanded the greatest punctiliousness even in his intimate courtiers, and M. de Leon, who evaded them, was punished one evening in a very disagreeable way for his disobedience.

This gentleman, who was an excellent shot, often hunted with the king; he was a great gourmand, and was exceedingly anxious one evening, on entering, to remain with the king, to eat fish. He had begged d'Aumont the preceding Tuesday to put him on the supper list for Friday; but the Duke de Gesvres, who made out the list, forgot to include him. Nevertheless M. de Leon unceremoniously seated himself at table. "There are thirteen of us," said the king to the Duke de Gesvres, "and I asked for twelve covers only; there is one too many. I think that it must be M. de Leon; give me the list; I wish to know." The Duke de Gesvres, who wished to save Leon, told Louis that he would ask Duport, the usher of the apartment, but instead of going to see Duport, he simply went out, having no intention of finding him, and, in a few moments, returned and said: "Sire, I could not find Duport nor the list." The king, still greatly annoyed, blushed and added: "But I desire it; Duport is on the right; you sought him on the left; go, get the list where he is."

Gesvres, as embarrassed as Leon was, went to find Duport and brought the king the fatal list on which the name of M. de Leon did not appear. The gourmand remained at table, nevertheless; but the king never addressed a word to him, during the whole supper never offered him anything, nor did he even glance his way. He affected to serve to the right whilst serving a dish of red gurnets, and he finished the dish just before he reached Leon. The poor man died of sorrow at this insult.

The king took pleasure even in leaving his most intimate courtiers in the most extreme uncertainty; this was especially true when according military honors. There were in 1738 twenty-two unofficered regiments. M. d'Angervilliers, minister of war, a vain and haughty man, seemed to take pleasure in seeing himself courted by the great and the distinguished. Five hundred nobles were asking for these regiments, and the king, who had only twenty-two colonelcies to give, kept everybody waiting. In order to increase the desires and solicitations, he published a list of the regiments leaving blank the space, which should be filled by the name of a colonel, and he said in full assembly: "How can I satisfy five hundred petitioners with twenty-two regiments? The disappointed ones will withdraw, but only to be the better able to leap." Then he resumed again and said, "not to leap better, really, but to have the same fate as before." Among the candidates the Duke de Rohan, Clermont, Gallerande, the Prince de Tingri, Crillon, Polignac, Crussol, Joyeuse, Saint-Simon, and others were obliged to make frequent and urgent solicitation. Fitz-James, on account of his birth, ventured to speak haughtily to a simple clerk in the war office. The latter complained to Cardinal de Fleury, who had the officer put in the Bastille for showing lack of respect to the clerk.

To these humiliations the king also added the rigorous distinction between the different receptions in the king's chambers. They were called *les entrées familières*, *les grandes entrées les premières entrées, and les entrées de la chambre.*

He who had the *entrées familières* could go as far as the king's bed whenever awake or reclining, and all the princes of the blood, (except M. de Conty) Cardinal de Fleury, the Duke de Charost, Mme. de Vantadour, and the king's nurse had this great prerogative. The first gentlemen had the *les entrées de la chambre*, when the king was about to arise. In the *premières entrées* people were simply admitted to do homage to the king, after he had arisen and was clad in his dressing gown. And all the courtiers, who were presented had *l'entrée de la chambre*, when the king was seated in his arm chair opposite his dressing table.

In the evening all these different introductions were equally distinguished from each other. Those holding them had the prerogative of visiting the king, but the *entrées de la chambre* were excluded when it was announced in a loud voice : Passez, Messieurs. Then those of the chamber coming out, the first valet-de-chambre gave a candle-stick to the courtiers who had the proper introduction, and they remained until the king retired. The king some years after assumed the habit of giving the candle-stick himself. There was no noble in the court who did not think himself greatly flattered on receiving the candle-stick from the king.

Cardinal de Fleury had busied the king with all these details from youth up, and taught him that all these trifles were great favors. He had made him believe that great passions, pity, candor, sincerity, were not the genuine qualities of monarchs; he kept him as free as possible from the affectionate sentiments of husbands towards their wives; the only feelings that Louis had at the age of twenty-five years were the natural sentiments of paternity; he showed great love for his children without exciting the jealousy of the cardinal, (for the latter did not see in the young princesses anything dangerous to his credit, which he certainly would not have to share with them). He lived with the one idea that the queen should limit herself to the duty of giving him children. Frenchmen, who watched the development of the character of the king, then recognized in this prince a defect in will and in feeling; but they acknowledged at the same time, that he had a just mind, an upright heart and a kind character.

The king, who learned that this was the prevalent opinion of him, seemed at one time to be affected by it and wished to vindicate himself by a letter to Mme. de Vantadour. This letter confirmed the observations of the court in their judgment. The king, in order to show his tender feelings, chose a poor circumstance; the letter turned on the following incident. The king was stung by a wasp which occasioned quite a severe swelling on his cheek and naturally caused exaggerated alarm on the part of the courtiers. Mme. de Vantadour, who had brought him up, seemed inconsolable over this *great* accident and the king in order to prove to her that he had feeling, notwithstanding what was said of him, wrote her the following letter. (It is well to note that his style was the same as that of the late king):—

"Thank God, mamma," said the king, "I was only slightly frightened, and have no great pain; the suffering only lasted a quarter of an hour and did not prevent me from running as if nothing had happened. The swelling only lasted a few days and did not prevent me from eating, which I was afraid of. And to tell you the truth, it didn't even prevent me from trying a new cook, who is excellent. For the present it has entirely disappeared. I remember very well the adventure of Mme. de la Lande; but the place cannot be mentioned, and moreover I think that I am more accustomed to suffering than she, perhaps too much so according to your idea, which I do not disapprove, knowing the origin of that feeling on your part. You know me thoroughly, dear mamma. You may assure yourself that gratitude will never fade from my heart; for, thank God, I have not a heart like the one I am accused of having.

"We have had a dreadful alarm concerning the cardinal; happily it has passed; he must have an iron constitution. God grant that his conduct will not drive him into a relapse! It is too bad that some people must grow old. The news that we have of him since he has returned to Issy, is good and it gives me great pleasure;

for he was greatly overwhelmed when he left, by the number of importunates who had come to see him. I charge you to embrace my children for me; they have all written me but I have not answered them. That is not kind of me; but I have other things to attend to. I embrace you, mamma, with all my heart and I await with a great deal of impatience the moment when I shall see you again, although to tell you the truth I am diverting myself greatly here and consequently I am in very good health. My daughter had a slight indisposition I have learned, but thank Heavens it did not result in anything serious. Our good Creator will preserve them if it pleases Him, since He has given them to us."

Instead of finding deep feeling in this letter, it is easily seen that the prince was occupied only with amusements, excursions, fear as to diet and the loss of his cook. The heart which he thought was talking, was not talking at all, to such a degree had the details of etiquette and affectation, which the lords of court had been pleased to complicate and multiply, repressed the natural human feelings of the king.

The dissolute habits of some young courtiers of his own age had also contributed to stamp out the young king's susceptibility to tender passions. All ages, all sexes, all ranks and almost all that surrounded the court had been corrupted since the time of the regency, which had been so fatal to our morals. Fleury, indeed, had put an end to noisy libertinism; but it was still coarse and active in those, who were obliged to hide it from the view of the rest of the courtiers. Surrounded by young lords, whose errors were well known, the king, before his marriage, permitted himself to be lead on by their example. The censor of the Memoirs of Marshall de Villars, or Abbé Anquetil, editor of the work, has suppressed what this general said with so great simplicity, a thing which the readers of these memoirs can understand and the detail of which has been so well preserved in original manuscript. But we will keep silent about facts that have become historical and have been attested in many ways.

These memoirs and these verses without doubt merit oblivion in the present generation; but history must preserve those which the princess herself composed in order to attract the young monarch. From the age of seventeen years his parents announced needs of love, and the manner in which he repulsed the princess, who never lost him from sight, gave the impression that both assiduity and delicacy were necessary to subjugate him. Mlle. de Charolais, always managing this affair of the heart with intelligence and with persistency, one day thought of this peculiar method of advancing her cause; she put the following verses into Louis's pocket:—

Vous avez l'humeur sauvage
Et le regard sediusant.
Se pourrait-il qu'a votre age
Vous fussiez indifferent?
Si l'amour veut vous instruire,
Cedez, ne disputez rien.
On a fonde votre empire,
Bien longtemps apres le sien.

It was thus that seduction perverted kings.

Louis permitted himself to be drawn into the maelstrom of vice, and although the history of his gallantry before the declaration of his love for Mme. Mailly is very obscure and little known, yet it is known that from the time that he went to Rambouillet less frequently he was loved in a fickle and in a secret manner by several women. His love for Mme. de Countess de Toulouse is not well authenticated. There are but a few indications of it, but his love for Mlle. de Charolais cannot be denied, and the prince would have been faithful to her for a longer time, if she had recognized the fact that the king demanded and longed for something strong and firm in the feelings of those who loved him.

In the midst of these diversions, still almost puerile, for the king was only sixteen years of age when his marriage took place, this prince, educated by Fleury in devotion, (or rather in the religious mummeries peculiar to the end of the reign of Louis XIV.) was sometimes violently agitated by qualms of conscience. He used to speak of death, of dying ones, and of the punishments of a future world. The Duke de Luynes one day told him that these pictures, and especially that of death, made him pass many sorrowful moments, and that at his age he ought to avoid the thought of such things. "Why, pray?" answered the king, "that moment must arrive, must it not?" He never spoke to any of the nuncios at the time of their dismission, without giving them this well-known compliment: "You will be pope some day, M. Abbé, I ask you therefore to remember me in your benediction." As during the life time of Louis XIV., he wished to accord to the general orders the ancient prerogative of being presented, and in 1736 the general of the Carmelites obtained his first audience and was received like an ambassador, with the same ceremonial and at the head of fourteen monks of his order. They entered in double file and ranged themselves behind the seats of the ladies, conducted thither by Saintot. Shortly after the general of the Minims, with an equal number of his monks, filed to the right and to the left, in the rear of the ladies. The general entered with Saintot and took his place in the midst of the circle. He bowed thrice to the king and queen, and exercised his prerogative of haranguing them in his Spanish mother tongue. All these functions amused the king, then twenty-six years of age, and from this it may easily be inferred what the trend of Fleury's teaching was.

Made thoroughly acquainted with all the methods of the church and their changes at certain seasons, Louis was as competent as a superior of a seminary to detect the mistakes of the officiating prelates, who, not being accustomed to saying mass, very frequently made errors in the ceremonies. Fleury had taught these ceremonies to his pupil, who took great pleasure in finding fault in the services of the bishop and telling his courtiers of them. A thousand times they heard rehearsed the embarrassment of the archbishop of Paris, Vintimille, who was at the head of the deputies of the assembly of the clergy of France, when they went through the ceremony of sprinkling holy water on the body of the duchess, in 1741. The clergy asked the king's permission to do this, and he replied that he had no objection. But it happened that the archbishop, having forgotten his book of canon-law, a monk gave him his hand-book, in which the prelate could not read; he therefore gave it to the archbishop of Tours, who was equally embarrassed; it was passed to another one whose sight was no better, and who was scarcely able to read. From one to another this church-book passed until it made the rounds of all the deputy bishops without any one of them knowing how to read it. The Bishop of Saint-Brieuc, more skillful than the others, could read an Oremus, but it happened to be an Oremus for a priest, and not for deceased persons. The king, who knew more as to church methods than all these prelates, was very pleased to recount the story of the embarrassment and ignorance of these chief men of the French clergy.

Besides the chase, the ceremonial, etiquette and church duties, the cardinal also permitted the young king to engage in another very strange amusement. He gave him a little garden, where, at the age of nine years, the cardinal taught him to plant lettuce, and the king, carefully observing the progress of these plants, took great pleasure therein. It was out of the same motive that the cardinal had him acquire some antiques at the sale of M. d'Estrées when he was twenty-eight years of age. For all these objects, keeping the prince away from the great subject of government, left the authority absolutely intact in the hands of the cardinal. We shall here give some details concerning these antiques, for outside of the anecdotes of the time, the history of art, etc., there are some facts in this story worthy of being preserved.

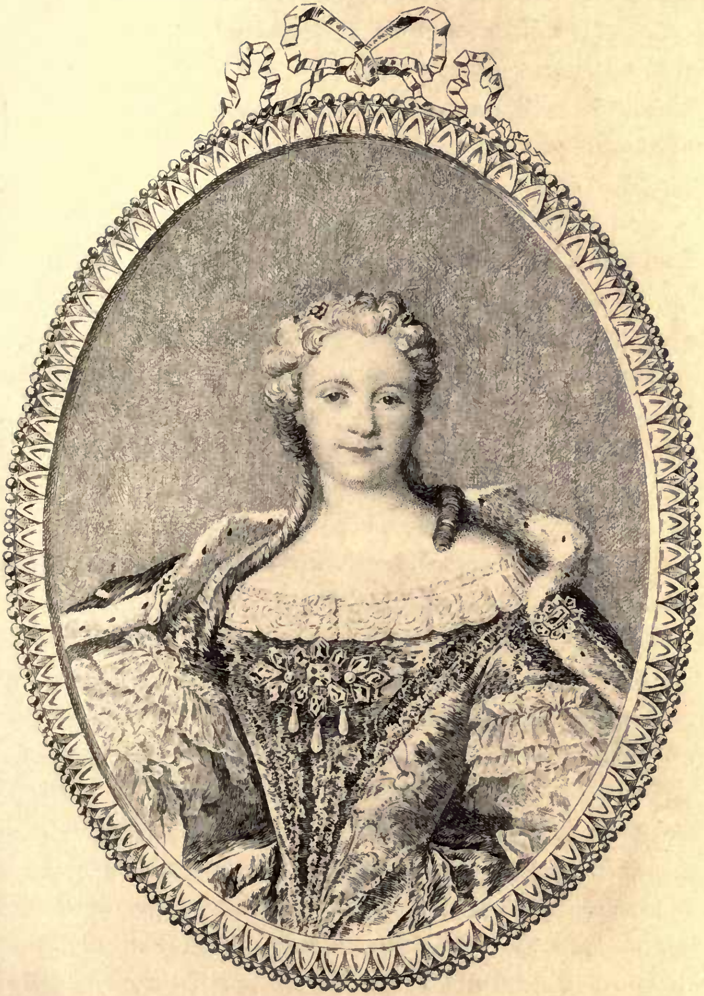
All that the king bought at this sale only cost sixty thousand francs; a porphyres bust of Alexander was admired greatly (this was one made by Praxiteles. He alone had the privilege of making likenesses of the emperor). Cardinal de Richelieu, who had ordered it from Greece, died before it came, and his niece, Mme. d'Aiguillon, who did not appreciate its value, showed it to Girardon, who was then building the mausoleum, which is now in the Sorbonne. This French Praxiteles was so struck with its beauty that he asked for it as the price of his work. Mme. d'Aiguillon gave it to him, adding a gratuity. At the death of Girardon, Marshal d'Estrées bought it for fifteen thousand francs, but it was lost in the confusion of his immense collection of antique statues and precious furniture heaped about in confusion. He even forgot that Praxiteles was its author, and ten or twelve years afterward, having forgotten that he was the possessor of the statue, he commissioned an expert to attempt to find where this bust of Alexander by Praxiteles was, as he had been assured that it was in Paris in the collection of some amateur. This order was given because he said he wished to acquire it himself. It cost one hundred louis to trace out where the bust was, and after having followed its history, and the different persons who had possessed it, he at last learned that it was in his own home. D'Estrées accumulated these antiques automatically, without any special artistic discrimination.

Such was the character of Louis XV. until about thirty years of age. That of the Queen Marie Leczinska, his wife, was still less brilliant; she was timid, reserved, and in constant fear lest she might displease her husband. Completely mastered by Cardinal de Fleury, obliged to submit to his will in everything, sometimes turning (but always in vain) to her husband in vain endeavors to have him shake off the empire of the minister over him, she was condemned to remain absolutely unrequited in all the favors that she asked for her friends and relatives; she was condemned to be kept in absolute ignorance of all affairs, and to live in the very midst of the court without knowing its intrigues. Charitable toward the poor, her disinterestedness was such that once at Compiègne she gave all the ready money that she had to the religious communities there and to the artillery schools, so that she was afterward compelled to play at Marly with borrowed money.

Mme. de Luynes, who knew her situation, vainly endeavored to get her to ask for an allowance, in addition to the very moderate sum which she received every month for her own private use. The duchess even went to the extent of representing to the cardinal the injustice of leaving the Queen of France without sufficient money. Fleury, assured of his relations with the king and treating the queen very gruffly and often harshly, listened to the duchess and answered her very coolly that he would settle this matter with Orri, comptroller-general.

As a matter of fact the cardinal did speak to the minister of finances concerning the queen and ordered him

MARIE LECZINSKA
ETCHED BY G. MERCIER



to give her a hundred louis. Orri, astonished, very respectfully suggested to His Eminence that this paltry sum was very far from what was due a queen, who only incurred a deficit on account of her charitable work, adding that he would himself give a like sum to his son, if he had run short on account of giving alms. Fleury who listened attentively and silently to all that he said answered: "Well, add fifty louis." Orri still less satisfied with this increase answered him, although with the greatest respect, that one hundred and fifty louis would not be sufficient and that he would not dare to present such a sum to the queen. Fleury, as if to get rid of Orri, added twenty-five louis to the sum and the comptroller-general, urging Fleury on by stages of twenty-five louis each, finally succeeded in exacting permission to give the queen twelve thousand francs. Finally he secured a signed order from Fleury and (without speaking to the cardinal) went triumphantly to ask the queen if this moderate sum would be sufficient for her. "I am very well satisfied with it," said the Queen of France. The king signed the order to have it paid to her, but its remittance was so dilatory, that she did not get the money until her customary allowance fell due. It was only then that the queen could again begin to amuse herself at *cavagnole* which was her favorite game, and which she had been deprived of for a long time on account of lack of money. Nevertheless she overlooked this conduct of the cardinal but her concealment of it was a mark of virtue rather than of policy. Some days after this affair she even sent for Mme. de Fleury, niece of the minister, to acquaint her, with a great show of cordiality, that she had an extra lady-in-waiting and out of friendship for her, she was glad to give her the new one. Madame the Duchess of Fleury, who lived as late as 1791, showed her appreciation of these kind and flattering expressions by recording them in writing.

Nevertheless, in spite of the aversion of the queen for interfering in court intrigues, the cardinal continually kept her from all knowledge of state affairs and deprived her of all favors and offices as far as he could. In 1739 desiring that Nangis, her favorite, should have the regiment of Pezé, Biron obtained it in spite of her; this led the queen to visit Biron and say flattering things and even take a collation in his apartments. Two years afterwards Nangis, promoted to Marshal of France, aspired to the command of our troops, and Fleury, still determined in his plans of excluding all the favorites of the queen from employment or office, preferred to send Marshal de Broglie. In vain did Nangis offer to serve under this general; Fleury, in order to evade him, stated that France could not incur greater expenses on his account. "You know," he said, "how much the services of a marshall cost." Nangis, still insistent, replied that he would renounce all honorariums, that he would serve for nothing, and like a French chevalier, simply for the honor of serving. The cardinal, driven to extremities, replied that the king could not consent to it on account of his frail health which was so precious to the queen and to the state.

Nangis was, as a matter of fact, quite sick for a few days, but it was due to the disappointment he experienced at the aggravating replies of the cardinal. He called on the cardinal the next day, and assuming the tone of a brusque military man and Marshal of France, said to him in the presence of every one : " I am sick, sir, as you say, but it is on account of your reply, which will kill me." Fleury, hesitating, wished to attribute his refusal to the royal will, in accordance with the usual custom of timid and embarrassed ministers, who assert that annoying answers come from their masters, and assume personally all the responsibilities for the bestowal of favors. But Nangis returned again and left him full of anger saying : " It is not to a person like me that such language can be used ; I understand perfectly well that the decision of the king depends on your will." The queen thoroughly annoyed by all these actions of the cardinal, spoke to Fleury about it, but he was still more firm in his refusal. She went to the king, begging him to employ M. de Nangis and complaining mildly as one would do to a husband, of the determination of the cardinal which kept from service all who were devoted to her. The king received her coldly and answered her still more coldly, as was his wont : " Madame, do as I do : ask no favors of him."

Nangis died at Paris during the Siege of Prague, after a long illness which was said to have been caused by his thwarted desire to serve. He was a man of feelings, and was well, and perhaps too well, loved by Mme. the Dauphine, Duchess of Bourgogne.

CHAPTER XL.

Anecdotes relative to Louis XV. and Queen Marie prior to the infidelities of the king.—Circumstances which lead up to these infidelities.—The fickle amours of the king.—Mlle. de Charolais, Mme. de Rohan.—The secret court of the king in 1732.—Nocturnal excursions of the king in 1736 during the confinement of the queen.—Curious adventure of Mme. Paulmier.

THE king had lived so discreetly with his wife up to 1732, that the public had not the slightest suspicions of those transient infidelities of which we have spoken and which have been attributed to him. We refer, especially to those with Mme. the Countess de Toulouse, with Mlle. de Charolais, with Mlle. de Clermont, her sister; with Mme. de Nesle, mother of Mme. de Mailly; with Mme. de Rohan, Mme. la Duchesse, and some others. He loved and esteemed the queen; and still showed her great attentions. He assured all his corruptors who spoke to him adroitly of the beauty of some women that they could not be compared with his wife.

He had by this princess a dauphin, a Duke d'Anjou, who died at the age of two and a half years and seven princesses, whose history we shall speak of; but the queen was so satiated with marriage pleasures, that as early as 1737 she showed but slight desire for the king's companionship. Louis, on the other hand, then twenty-seven years of age, was very exacting and there was, naturally, a gradual estrangement.

Before the estrangement became complete however, some actions of the king were observed which gave the courtiers a great deal to talk about and gave an impetus to the intrigues that were finally to separate him from the queen. The king retired in the evening to the small dining-room to dine with the young nobles of his age and it was observed on the 24th of January, 1732 (a day on which the company had drunk a little more than usual) that Louis drank to the health of his unknown mistress, clinked his glass and invited the guests to clink theirs with him, to guess the name of the unknown lady and to declare to the company what lady there could please him. The guests numbered twenty-four; Mme. la Duchess, the younger, had seven votes, Mme. de Beaujolais also had seven; and the rest declared themselves for Mme. Lauraguais, granddaughter of Lassay and daughter-in-law of the Duke de Villars-Brancas, who had been at court for a month. It was judged, therefore, after that repast, that the king was thinking of a mistress.

From 1732 until 1737 the king was very reserved in his love affairs and maintained great secrecy in regard to them, with the courtiers; but it was observed on the 5th of March, 1737, that the king left Versailles for the first time to go to the opera, where it was said that he had been called by a secret intrigue. He had sent orders to Saint-Sauveur and to Croismart, his squires, to attach six horses to the gondola of Chalais and had already ordered it to be preceded by the Prince de Soubise and the Duke d'Hostun (Tallard), who had gone to buy cloaks and who found but a single new one for Louis, who took it and went to the opera with them. Two officers of the guards, who knew the plan, ran after him and asked, on entering the room, where the king was, which caused him to be recognized. Louis, who feared public opinion and especially the cardinal, hastily left the opera on being called, and went afoot as far as Rue Saint-Nicaise where M. the Premier dwelt. His path was lighted by a few bootblacks who accompanied him with Soubise and d'Hostun. The preceptor had held him in such dependence and so completely away from the society of women that his courage failed him and it is not known whom he sought at the opera on this occasion. These bold, yet secret, actions of the king, were renewed during the confinement of the queen; the valets, who joyfully saw this time arrive, so favorable for their schemes, redoubled their intrigues for the purpose of presenting to and securing the favorable reception of women by the king.

One night, at the time of her confinement, in 1737, Villeroy, captain of the guards (who was determined to give the king Mme. d'Andelot) and a few others, were promenading during the heat of the night of July 16th, for the purpose of diverting the king from his singular agitation, which they had encouraged by a thousand stories. Having disguised themselves, they went through the streets of Versailles in search of some interesting adventures. They encountered two women. These women redoubled their pace. Mlle. de Charolais, that she might not startle them before the king and his retinue came up, recognized them, and saw that it was the hostess of Cheval-Rouge, Rue des Recollets, with her servant who were in search of the patrol to put an end to some quarrel which had arisen in their tavern. The king, who recognized Mme. Paulmier as a beautiful and honest woman, seized her somewhat gruffly, without revealing his identity, telling her that he would render her some service if there were fire in her house. Villeroy, on the other hand, caressed the servant, and Mlle. de Charolais, facetious and wanton in her conversation, was overcome with laughter at the incident.

Mme. Paulmier, somewhat anxious, told Louis and the other gentleman that they were mistaken, that she was an honorable woman. She threatened to call for help, and make noise enough to bring assistance. The king, affected, moderated his caresses, while Mme. Paulmier complained of the indifference of the king and police for not watching over the security and virtue of women, even at the very gates of the castle.

The king conducted her to the Suisses to assist her against the guests who were quarreling in her hotel, and called three times in a loud voice for Forestier (for that was the name of the commander of the Suisses guards). This caused the king to be recognized and thoroughly aroused the Suisses, who heard themselves called by the king at a very unwonted hour. As to Mme. Paulmier, Louis ordered them to follow her, and she returned to her home, overjoyed at having proven her chastity and uprightness to the king.

CHAPTER XLI.

The intrigues of court nobles to give the king a recognized mistress after they had learned of the adventure of Mme. Paulmier.—Character of Mme. Portail, rebuffed by Louis.—Intrigues of Mme. the Duchess de Fleury, De Bontemps, of Lebel, and Mme. Tencin to secure a permanent mistress for the king.—Attention is turned to Mme. Mailly.

THE anecdote of Mme. Paulmier and some others of a similar nature, gave the courtiers to understand that the king was looking for a mistress, and they eagerly sought this means of furthering their own ends by presenting their own candidates. Every faction in the court was emulous in presenting a woman, and there was a great gathering of them, from Mlle. de Charolais and Mme. de Rohan, down to slips of girls.

The Duke de Richelieu, who wished to play a rôle, brought Mme. Portail, and the valets-de-chambre were commissioned to take charge of the details of the first interview; but the king (in spite of the nocturnal adventure with Mme. Paulmier) was rather delicate concerning the proprieties. He feared the character of Mme. Portail, who was somewhat coquettish, rattle-brained and even mischievous. The king did not offer to see her again, and told Lugeac to take his place, because Mme. de Portail had a disagreeable deformity on her neck. Lugeac, in an obscure place, deceived Richelieu and Mme. Portail, and Mme. Portail obtained from Fleury a pension of two thousand dollars as her recompense. Nevertheless, proud of her temporary success, Mme. Portail, from that time on, gave free bent to her life of libertinism ; she seemed to be smitten with all the nobles of her time ; not a single one in her quarter escaped her ; it was noted that she had made the tour of the Palace Royale *sans intercaler*, and an intrigue of the Duke de Richelieu in her favor disquieted the ministers and the courtiers to such an extent that each one proclaimed his adventures very hastily, so that she might not reappear in the castle again or in court. Maurepas, jealous of Richelieu and detesting all the women whom the duke loved, secured an order from the king to imprison her, and took pleasure in going himself to acquaint her with the king's orders. He first told her that she would do well to go to a convent, and as she did not seem inclined to yield at the first invitation, Maurepas ordered her to yield. She was afterwards legally accused of having committed a great crime and cast into the dungeon of Vincennes in 1746. She escaped from there through the intercession of Mme. de Pompadour, who gave her her liberty, because she was naturally inclined to sympathize with all those whom Maurepas hated. This disquieted the first president so much that he gave up his place that he might not be obliged (so his confrères said) at every session of parliament to show "his most ornate brow," and moreover to avoid knotty affairs which were coming up in parliament at that time. Thus honor and liberty was the price paid by the first woman who dared, in spite of Fleury, to use her wiles on the person of the king.

Mademoiselle, who visited Cardinal de Fleury and who had long interviews with him, tried to secure the position of mistress for Mme. d'Ancezune; but the preceptor, putting an obstacle in the way of this union, compelled her husband to take her to her country seat of Sezanne for six weeks.

Thus Mme. la Duchess, the party of Cardinal de Fleury, Bontemps, Le Bel and Bachelier, in unison, tried to secure the king's consent to receive Mme. de Mailly, the woman who had been most pleasing to the king. Louis still regarded the determination to acknowledge a favorite, as a great event in France, even as a sort of dangerous revolution, capable of dividing his court and of depriving him of the affection of some of his subjects. So that for a long time the king was tortured by his desires and by his fears of displeasing the nation; but the hidden intrigues of his courtiers, who were extremely anxious to know what was to be their relations in the new condition of things, did their best to encourage the king to go forward with the matter. The king had secretly loved Mme. de Mailly for a long time. Fleury and his faction were aware of this, and they conducted themselves accordingly. Mme. de Mailly was the first of four sisters whom the king loved, and we shall speak of this family.

CHAPTER XLII.

Anecdotes concerning the Mailly family.—The morals of the high French nobility before its depravity in the court of the kings.—Character of Mme. de Nesle, née Coligny; of her daughter-in-law, née La Porte-Mazarin and mother of the four famous favorites of Louis XV.

THE House of Mailly (known to French history from the middle of the eleventh century in the person of Anselme de Mailly, instructor of the Count of Flanders, and governor of his states, who was killed at the Siege of Lille) had preserved that military pride, which had distinguished its origin in France. Its ancient and authentic origin was not at all questioned and the number of the family branches, and the number of great offices members of this family filled in the state, had so increased the honor of its lineage, that all the Maillys placed on their arms, three mallets, with this superb device: "*Hogne qui Vounra.*"

The customs of the nobles, that composed the different branches of the Mailly family, however, no longer were in keeping with those of former times. The corrupt court of the kings that had changed all the French nobles into courtiers or courtesans; had substituted for French nobility a libertinism, entirely different from the gallant chivalry which is to be found only in our published chronicles. Two women, Marie de Coligny and Mme. de Nesle, née La Porte-Mazarin, were the first to introduce the customs and morals of the modern court into the Mailly de Nesle family.

The first married, at a very early age, during the reign of Louis XIV., the Marquis de Nesle. She was endowed with rare beauty; she had a mind richly stored with knowledge, and at first she was passionately in love with the marquis her husband, whom she always cited as an example of love and fidelity. Her husband, having died at the age of thirty-six, in the year 1688, at the Siege of Philisbourg, she was so disconsolate, that yielding to her deep sorrow, she swallowed bit by bit, like another Artemisia, the ashes of everything that came to her from the army, which had belonged to her husband. But however profound her sorrow had been her sudden forgetfulness of duty was scandalous; she imitated the court-ladies of her time, and finally married Albergotti.

Her son, Marquis Louis III. of Nesle, married Mlle. de la Porte-Mazarin, whose wantonness was well known. This marriage took place in 1739. The queen, whose lady-in-waiting she was, was inclined to exact from her long readings when she was about to go to take part in some festival. She took pleasure at these times in having her read "the imitation de Jesus Christ," "the Holy Scriptures," and sometimes the history of France, to amuse her. She died in 1729, leaving five daughters, who attracted the attention of King Louis XV.

The first, Louise-Julie, married Louis-Alexandre de Mailly, her cousin, in 1726, and died in 1751. She was the first and eldest of the sisters, who were loved by the king.

The second, Pauline-Félicité, married Félix de Vintimille and died in 1741.

The third, Diane-Adelaide, born in 1714, married Louis de Brancas, Duke de Lauraguais, in 1742.

The fourth, Hortense-Félicité, married the Marquis de Flavacourt in 1739; she lived until 1791.

The fifth, Marie-Anne, married the Marquis de la Tournelle, in 1734, who died in 1740; she survived him four years, dying November 3, 1774, under the name of the Duchess de Châteauroux.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Character of courtiers and valets that corrupted Louis XV. when he was twenty-two years of age.—Character of Bachelier and Le Bel, valets-de-chambre.—Lazure dismissed—Mme. de Tencin commissioned with the duty of selecting a mistress.—Mme. de Mailly is preferred and the reason why.—The infidelities of Louis XV. laid on the queen.—Conjugal anecdotes of the late king and queen.

It was the eldest of these ladies, daughters of Mme. de Nesle that Fleury consented to allow the king to love after 1732, although this was kept in the greatest secrecy. The king, who made but very slow and very slight progress in the use of liberty under Fleury, was at that time very modest, deeply religious and had he not been enticed, it is doubtful if he would have selected this lady as his mistress. The cardinal, who wished to preserve that somewhat misanthropic disposition which he had given him, kept every enterprising woman away from him, and was only willing to allow safe liaisons. He was very well pleased that the king was at his ease only with Mme. the Countess de Toulouse and some others whom this wily old man permitted to associate with him. In spite of his principles, which granted the necessity of a mistress, Fleury thought that he would have to aid and favor the cause of Mme. de Mailly, in order to exclude every ambitious or formidable woman. For the character of Mme. de Mailly was mild, modest, reserved and even timid, qualities the very opposite of those which the cardinal feared. Bachelier and Le Bel, first valets-de-chambre of Louis, were therefore authorized to urge on and keep up this intrigue.

This Bachelier, who was a very important man in this ministry, was the son of the first valet of the wardrobe, born at La Rochefoucauld, and was a blacksmith's apprentice. The horses of the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, grand master of this herald's office, were brought to him to shoe. He pricked the animals foot in shoeing, and he thereupon renounced the anvil to follow the retinues of the noble. He went to court with him, as one of his brothers was in his service, as a valet-de-chambre. The latter dying, this farrier took his place and was so satisfactory that he obtained, on the recommendation of the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, a position as the first valet of the wardrobe. Then he asked the king to knight him, and left a son, one of the four first valets-de-chambre of the king of whom we have spoken, who was lieutenant of the king in the government of Versailles, and who purchased his office from Blouin. He died governor of the Louvre. His credit being well established and his favor increasing from day to day, he married his daughter to the Marquis de Colbert, and was, in 1736, in such intimate confidence with the king that he was commissioned with the conduct of this love intrigue with Mme. de Mailly.

Bachelier was assisted by Le Bel, the other first valet-de-chambre. They understood each other so well that they persuaded the young monarch to take the plainest woman in the court for mistress. This Le Bel, whose son was in the personal service of the king, was grandson of Dominique, a concierge. His father had been concierge of the Castle of Versailles and his eldest son inherited the position. But this son lost it on account of an indiscretion, and it was given to the younger Dominique, who was also the confidant of the love affairs between the king and Mme. de Mailly.

Lazure was dismissed from the secret parties and suppers at his instigation, for Le Bel, being of a kindly disposition, was admirably adapted to serve the king and to anticipate his every wish. On the other hand, Lazure, having neither the talents nor the inclination to do it, and having strict ideas of morality, was of course dismissed, and the easy morals of Le Bel secured his prefference. The office of the first valet of the wardrobe became vacant then; an understanding was reached and the following month he was made first valet-de-chambre.

Le Bel had a discreetly secretive as well as polished character. He readily fell in with everything that was creditable in the court, and was always busy seeking out something that would please the king in accordance with the wish of the prime minister. He secretly prepared these pleasures for the king, with an air of mystery and was constantly about in the secret apartments of the king. Such were the two first valets-de-chambre who favored the amours of the king.

Mme. de Tencin, sister of the cardinal, was charged with the outside details. For a long time a friend of Mme. de Mailly, she saw Cardinal de Fleury and had very secret correspondence with the king, to whom she transmitted the current news of the day, which had been dictated to her by Fleury. She could not live without intrigues, and when intrigues were wanting she loved excitement so much that she very readily planned new ones. She had lead such an indecent life with her brother, and it was so publicly known, that they were still scorned by every one for it; they would even have been driven from good and honest circles, if they had not always been skillful enough to make themselves indispensable by assiduous assistance in everything which was most important to Fleury and to the king himself. This caused them to be constantly feared as dangerous persons capable of arousing enmities. Their artifices were made use of, they were given employment, and we shall see by what intrigues Mme. de Tencin succeeded in becoming an important personage and making herself notorious.

This woman, aside from her wily nature, had the spirit of a libertine. Her beauty, her genius, and her brilliant coquetry had attracted about her a brilliant court in Paris; she received officials, wits, courtiers, magistrates, financiers, who composed her very interesting society to the despair and envy of her rivals. She also presided over the secret assemblies of prelates, who, not being able to visit the Nuncio to conspire with Rome concerning the Bull, held their "Sanhedrim" at her home, although she was dishonorable in everything that should have been held pious in the clergy, and was discredited by her indecent and indiscriminate relations with every one. Even at an advanced age, she still loved variety of pleasures, and in this regard she had neither constancy nor delicacy. But many brilliant qualities of mind and a seductive manner brought her a large number of suitors. Such was the famous, female intriguer, who prepared the way for the declaration of love by the king for Mme. de Mailly, in concert with Bachelier and Le Bel.

Bachelier, who had brought Louis XV. up, so to speak, had acquired over his mind a sort of authority, different, however, from that exercised over him by the cardinal. All these combined influences had succeeded in making the prince such a nonentity, that up to 1732 he never had accomplished anything independently of the will of those who had surrounded him from his childhood. Bachelier submitted an account of the doings of the interior of the palace to the cardinal, and received instructions as to his conduct with reference to them. He never failed to carry out these instructions to the letter. For a long time he had given Louis to understand what public rumor and the discontent of the provinces would be if he associated with any woman displeasing to the court or to the city. He pointed out to him the situation of Louis XIV., who, in spite of his great character, had subjected himself, without being aware of it, to a favorite whom he made his wife, and who was detested by a great part of the nation.

The remonstrances of Le Bel succeeded those of Bachelier, for he was guided by the same views and he regarded the declaration of a mistress as a very delicate affair; but he also added that, if His Majesty wished to devote himself to Mme. de Mailly, who had the honor of pleasing him, he did not think this liaison would be disapproved.

He praised the lady for her character, her prudence, her modesty, her reserve, and said that people who detested favorites would not be so very much scandalized by this lady, with whom the king, moreover, had lived on such good terms since 1732.

The plan of declaring Mme. de Mailly as the king's favorite having been formed and determined upon, they endeavored, in order to avoid the effect of a great scandal in France, to find good pretexts and reasons for giving her to the king. These courtiers were no better than they are to-day; but in 1735 the Court of France still paid respect and homage to the conjugal virtues which were to be banished from the court of the king. And Fleury, who did not like the queen at all, found it to his advantage to charge her openly, in the eyes of France, with the infidelity of the king, and to make her responsible for it. A cold temperament, a certain inconvenient illness, a piety more than superstitious, a confessor, who, being a courtier, gave her bad advice in order to please Fleury, were the causes attributed in public to justify this infidelity of the king. The queen, who had rebuffed him for a long time, was really, although innocently, the first cause of the public confession of the infidelities of the king, which were afterwards one of the prime sources of the calamities and dishonor of France. It is well known that the queen had determined to see the king no more, and Bachelier, having gone to notify her one evening that her husband was about to visit her, she replied that she was very reluctant to be compelled to announce that she could not receive His Majesty.

That was just what they desired of her. Bachelier, being well instructed as to poisoning Louis's mind, was sent back again to repeat the same question, which was followed by the same reply. The third message had no happier outcome. Then the king, very rough, determined and at once swore, that he would never have relations with the queen again, and that he *demanderait plus le devoir ;* to preserve an expression of the first valet-de-chambre.

The next morning another scene was being prepared at Versailles with the same object in view. They determined to expose by a pretended imprudence, the liaison of the king with the Countess de Mailly, which had been carefully concealed up to this time. The king often came to visit her unannounced, but when he did not wish to leave his apartment, he sent for her, and Mme. de Mailly was complaisant enough to this prince, whom she idolized, to blindly comply with his every wish. Led this evening by Bachelier, and covered with a hooded-cape, she was recognized by two ladies, who saw her enter into the inner apartments of Louis, and the next day this was reported.

Thus the queen lost the king, or, rather, it is thus that the king lost his wife and became separated from her. He had been guilty, it is true, of some infidelities toward her, but up to the time of his declarations of his love for Mme. le Countess de Mailly, he had never ceased to love the queen, nor to live with her as a devoted husband. And inexorable history, history that judges virtue and justice, and which cannot pay homage nor flatter crowned vice in its judgments, must say that the imprudences of this princess, the unkindnesses which she affected and her cruel refusals, contributed to French misfortunes by encouraging the libertinism of the king. Prior to her last confinement, she had too often rebuffed this prince. More than once on leaving the scene of his orgies in his inner apartments, where the king often drank (in the company of the young nobles of the court) somewhat more wine than prudence dictated, she permitted herself to treat the king with scant courtesy, using harsh words to one who was infinitely jealous of kind attentions. If he presented himself in the evening and she had already retired, she reproached him because of his champagne-laden breath. If she had not retired, she pretended to continue her prayers until the king had gone to sleep, or until he had become impatient. The cold nature of the queen and the fervent temperament of Louis were the daily cause of these secret domestic quarrels. For a long time the king endured this, and the queen, who still enjoyed the constancy of the king in his love for her, lost him irrevocably without anticipating it, for the king was never reconciled to her again. The nobles of the court, who knew of these quarrels between the two, being informed of them through the valets and the ladies-in-waiting, and knowing it resulted from a difference in temperaments, instead of endeavoring to reconcile them, aided the secret views of Fleury. The companions of the secret orgies of the king incited him and emboldened him in yielding to relations with strange women, and lastly to the women who dishonored him. When the king had once indulged in these transient and varied pleasures, being a born libertine and no longer restrained by his piety, he continued to lead the life described and never reformed.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Character and portrait of Mme. de Mailly.—Her disinterestedness.—Her first interview with Louis XV. in his private chamber.—The modesty of Louis XV.—The boldness of Bachelier.—Anecdote of the Marquis de Puysieux, first lover of Mme. de Mailly.—Infidelities of the king.—His libertinism.—The boldness and repartee of Courtenvaux.

FLEURY, who avoided the secret court of the king and his private life, which he nevertheless ruled, as his orders were punctiliously carried out, was not deceived in the choice of a mistress. Mme. la Countess de Mailly was of a sweet disposition, reserved and timid, lacking knowledge of state affairs and easily amused by small talk and by sportive ways. She was of the same age as the king and of a similar disposition, having moral qualities capable of winning the love and esteem of the prince. She was a constant friend, incapable of deception, indulgent, having uprightness of spirit and living in the court without ambition and without ulterior motives. She was always elegantly, yet daintily, dressed. She carefully concealed that part of her bosom which the custom of the court left exposed. Her voice was somewhat harsh; but she had large and beautiful eyes, full of fire and brilliancy; she had an olive complexion, a long face, a beautiful brow and cheeks. She loved the king for himself, doubtless because he was the most beautiful and most amiable man of his court and even of his realm. Content to love him secretly since 1732, she had never desired to profit by his favor nor to make it known; during all that time she never asked for any favor in behalf of her relatives, still less for herself, and she received only trifling presents, which were more worthy of a poor peasant than of a king of France. She, herself, paid all the expenses of the little pleasure parties in which the king took part. It was therefore the picture of La Vallière, whose character, morals and sweetness she portrayed; and her prudence and reserve were such that often being loved by the king for nine years even in 1741 she had neither torches nor favors for the reception of Louis, who sometimes came to play at her house, and she was obliged in these circumstances to borrow them from her neighbors.

In 1735, the Marquis de Puysieux, who had loved Mme. de Mailly, endeavored to return to her. Amorous and attentive, he revealed his attachment and renewed affection and complained that it was not returned. Chauvelin, who had control of the administration of foreign affairs, was in the secret, for he, at that time, enjoyed the confidence of the cardinal, and seeing the embarrassment of the minister, proposed to send him to Naples; and Puysieux, who had served in the cavalry with distinction as a brigadier, was ordered to prepare himself for service. Astonished, yet still in love, he did not wish to accept without the permission of Mme. de Mailly, whom he loved better than this embassy. He went to do her homage, and tell her that he would not leave without orders from her, and that he should love her forever. Mme. de Mailly, who already loved the king passionately, received this sacrifice in a jesting manner. "You are going then, M. de Puysieux?" she said to him, "bon voyage." Puysieux, bitterly grieved, carried his sorrow with him to Rome and through Italy.

In spite of this reserve of Mme. de Mailly, the people began to murmur on account of the love affairs of the king, and did not celebrate his Parisian visits with the wonted enthusiasm, after the declaration of the favors he accorded the Countess de Mailly.

Moreover it was known at Paris that Louis, besides his love for this woman, showed for Mme. la Duchesse, the younger, much more friendliness than a king ordinarily shows a princess. He used to go to see her at Chantilly by the way of Compèigne, in returning to Versailles, and his visits became more frequent. In 1736 he presented her with a magnificent aigrette of diamonds, worth one hundred thousand francs, which astounded the courtiers. The king wished to give her only his portrait, enriched with diamonds at first, but the old duchess, her mother-in-law, thinking that the king was too beautiful and her daughter-in-law too young, asked for the aigrette in place of the portrait, in order that the gift might seem less gallant and that she might share it with her. At the same time the king was suspected of several other gallantries, which went to the point that for a long time in February, 1738, he was obliged to keep to his room, under the pretext of rheumatism, while all Paris knew that the malady was of a different nature. This was quite openly joked about, and M. le Duc urged the king to call the doctors and surgeons but the king refused, for this he said, would bring about too great publicity. Then Courtenvaux (afterwards Marshal d'Estrées), who had preserved the peculiar freedom of saying whatever he chose to the king, said openly: "But, sire, this will not prevent all Paris from having spoken about it. It is said openly in Paris, that the surgeons were required by Your Majesty rather than the consulting physicians." M. le Duc called the king's attention to the harshness of this reply, but the king, who liked Courtenvaux, answered: "For a long time I have been accustomed to hearing Courtenvaux tell me just what he thinks." Thus the king passed in a short time from an extreme reserve towards women to the excess of libertinism. But this libertinism was not as yet burdensome to the state.

CHAPTER XLV.

Character of Mme. de Mailly before and after the declaration of the favors of the king.—Ambition of her sister, a pensionnaire in the Abbey of Port-Royal.—Mme. de Mailly invites her to her home.—She pleases Louis XV.—She is declared second mistress in 1739.—She is married to the Marquis de Vintimille.—Anecdote of the Castle of Madrid where Mme. de Charolais received the newly-married couple.—Acquisition of Choisy for the pleasures of the king.—Character and sketch of Mme. de Vintimille.—Her genius and her ambition.—Fleury jealous and ill at ease.—The plan is conceived in his faction of ruining the new favorite and her confinement is awaited.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY and his cabal had not been deceived in the choice of an avowed mistress. From 1732 to 1735, Mme. de Mailly lived at court without committing any act of imprudence, without manifesting the least vanity and, in fact, keeping all France ignorant of her possession of the heart of the king.

After her declaration in 1735, she lived there with the same modesty, without intermeddling with the affairs of the state and without asking any favors. She was loved and respected by the ladies of the court and by those, even, who longed for the favor of the king and who secretly wished to displace her. A lady aspired to it in 1739. She lived in the Abbey Port-Royal. This was Mlle. de Nesle, sister of Mme. de Mailly, who afterwards was married to M. de Vintimille in order to veil, after the fashion, the loves of the king; in which way homage was paid to a virtue so scandalously scoffed at in the French Court.

In the calm of the convent Mlle. de Nesle, a simple pensionnaire, twenty-four years of age, had planned to dominate France, to win the heart of the king, subjugate him, supplant her sister, drive Fleury from power, as well as all of the leading ministers, and to govern the affairs of state herself. She knew that she was not prepossessing and that the king loved beauty and personal grace; but she had a lofty ambition, a creative imagination, a bold and decided character, and she had said to a canoness, one of her intimate friends called Mme. de Dray: "I shall write letter after letter to my sister, Mailly; she is kind; she will invite me to visit her; I shall win the love of the king; I shall dismiss Fleury and govern France." These prophecies, which were partially realized, were made public by a court-lady who lived in 1791 and from whom they were obtained.

The simple recital of this anecdote is a description of the character of Mme. de Nesle. She did indeed write letter after letter to Mme. de Mailly, who, not seeing in her sister the deceitfulness which was foreign to her own nature, allowed herself to be influenced by these frequent letters and invited her sister to Paris and soon to her intimate interviews with the king. The king only needed a character of this kind, petulent, bold and witty, to be captivated. Mme. de Mailly, who adored the king, pardoned him so well for this unexpected infidelity, that she offered her sister her apartment and her bed, to hide from the eyes of France what historic faithfulness compels us to reveal here. The king, therefore, whiled away his time, now with one and then with the other; and Mlle. de Nesle was so clever and so adroit that she forced the king to confess to some intimate courtiers, that she was loved equally well as her sister. This was equal to declaring it to the whole country.

The 7th of June, 1739, was the occasion of this public confession and in the evening Mlle. de Nesle dined with the king at Muette for the first time. The attending court-ladies were Mlle. de Charolais, Mlle. de Clermont, Mme. d'Antin, the wife of Marshal d'Estrées, and Mme. de Mailly, who were called some days afterwards *les blus hardies*. As a matter of fact, after this example and this first step, other go-betweens were seen to put in their appearance, to wit: Mme. de Chalais, Mme. de Talleyrand, Mme. de Sassenage, Mme. de Sourches and Mme. de Ruffec. History does not allow their names to be passed in silence; for we shall see in the sequel that Mme. de Luynes, that most virtuous woman, refused to follow their examples.

They turned to the Noailles family, who were regarded as being ambitious and whom they thought capable of consenting to a marriage to hide the base love affairs of the king. As far as he could, Fleury kept all the Noailles away from the king's intimate favor. It was thought that they wished to enter by that door and it was imagined that they planned to win over Count de Noailles (now Marshal de Mouchy). In vain did they seek to have him take the initiative and show some eagerness to yield; the old marshall was so offended at it and so bitterly opposed to it that the project fell through. Then Vintimille was suggested. He was the great nephew of the Archbishop of Paris, who was ambitious to become a cardinal and who opened his eyes wide at the two hundred thousand pounds which Louis offered, together with the hope of a place as lady-in-waiting for Mlle. de Nesle, six thousand pounds pension, an apartment in the Castle of Versailles, as well as other important considerations. The marriage was solemnized on these conditions, and the old uncle, Archbishop of Paris, performed the ceremony in his palace. Since Louis did not wish to permit the new husband to enjoy Mme. de Vintimille nor allow her to come to Versailles the first night; and as the archbishop did not believe it within the bonds of propriety on account of religious opinion to lend them his palace, mademoiselle, an easy-going and accommodating princess, very complaisantly lent them her apartments so that this married couple might seem to consummate the marriage they had just contracted. The newly married couple therefore accompanied her to her home in the Château de Madrid to save appearances, whilst the king came to La Muette to sup with Mlle. de Clermont, the Duchess de Ruffec, Ladies de Chalais and Talleyrand. When they assumed that the marriage supper was over, the king ordered the ladies to enter his gondola and went to the Castle of Madrid to get the newly married ones. Several ladies who were not presented, including Mme. Nicolai, were there that evening; the king played at cavaganole. After carrying out this farce, to keep up appearances, Marshal d'Estrées, who was invited to the marriage, ascertaining the truth concerning these circumstances, was offended, and that very evening left for Bagatelle, as did Mme. de Ruffec. We cannot keep silent in these Memoirs about these details. It is a lesson to princes and kings, who owe a good example to their people. They know that their most secret conduct is observed, that its memory is preserved in writing and that their reputation, consigned to the keeping of courtiers by whom they are surrounded for the simple purpose of gaining favors at the expense of the people, is in indifferent hands. As long as these favors continue to flow as from an inexhaustible source kings are divine. When the source ceases to be prolific, discontent manifests itself and princes are no longer anything but simple men, whose weaknesses and errors we love to unveil.

The day after the marriage, Mme. de Vintimille arranged her toilet at the Château Madrid where Louis was present during its progress. After dinner mademoiselle presented Mme. de Vintimille, the mother-in-law, to the king at La Muette. The Vintimille family, even the archbishop himself, endeavored to conceal the conduct of the king, but the greater its efforts were, the more the public were persuaded that Vintimille was the most complaisant of all husbands. Mme. de Mailly, still idolizing the king, was persuaded that all had been hidden from the public eye, pardoned her lover for his infidelities and her kindness went even to the point of receiving her rival, Mme. de Vintimille, in her apartments. From that time on they were inseparable and

Mme. de Mailly allowed herself to be dominated by her. Sunday, October 5, 1739, the queen had the cruel sorrow of seeing Mme. de Vintimille presented to her by mademoiselle, in her own apartments, where she also saw at one and the same time the new favorite. The old ones—Mme. de Mazarin, Mme. de Flavacourt, and Mme. de la Tournelle—she was obliged graciously to receive all these ladies at once. Soon these odious pictures of conjugal infidelity affected her so that she left them with coldness. The husband, Vintimille, was simply a good fellow. He was a participant in the little suppers and in all the hunting expeditions of the king. The horses of the king were his; the old Marquis du Luc likewise profited by the favor of his daughter-in-law; for, never having ridden in the carriage of the king, although by his birth he was entitled to this favor, he seized this opportunity to do it. The king received him with distinction and, henceforth, father and husband, the married sister and the unmarried, all went together to the hunt in open carriages and supped together. A favor must be something very glorious and something very attractive at the Court of France, since this office effaces the shame which would cause the veriest peasant of our provinces to blush.

Some time after, the old Marquis de Nesle had to have aid, as his finances were in an insolvent condition. The king named commissioners to adjust them. For a long time he received twenty-four thousand francs pension, for the two hundred thousand francs of revenue that he originally had were taken by his creditors thirteen years before. But since M. de Nesle was displeased or because he insulted Maboul, one of the commissioners, whom the king had ordered to arrange his business affairs, and because he spoke garrulously of the doings of the times and especially of his daughters, the king exiled him to Evreux, just as Louis XIV. had sent Montespan to one of the provinces.

Nevertheless, the king, free, gallant, without prejudice, had hesitated to give himself up to all these pleasures in well frequented chateaux where he could be observed by every one. And, since these amiable libertines wished to conceal their orgies from the world, Choisy was purchased. The beautiful view and the neighboring forest of Senart pleased the king, who became passionately fond of Mme. de Vintimille, and used to go to Choisy, while Mme. de Mailly, whom he had already abandoned, was in service to the queen at Versailles. On New Year's day, 1740, the only lady whom the king favored with presents was Mme. de Vintimille.

Yet, in spite of these festivals and the expenses which they occasioned, the king was very economical and cautious, and during the year 1739, as is well known, he received only fifty-five thousand louis beyond his regular allowance. His two mistresses were not at all avaricious and made no great inroads on his purse, although they received only as their inheritance, seven thousand, five hundred louis income. Mme. de Mailly, like a second La Vallière, loved Louis for himself alone. Yet he was already getting beyond her influence, whilst Mme. de Vintimille resembled Mme. de Montespan more, for she loved power, glory and influence, only she had not the least interest in riches. She was younger, more of a schemer and more witty than Mme. de Mailly, but she was not beautiful. Her mind was capricious, and she had an uneven disposition. She could easily assume different characters in her conversation; she was ambitious to rule, and she first began by studying every phase of the character of the person, whom she wished to subject to her power. She established her empire over them gradually, but always insidiously, and ended by having supreme power over them. She always claimed that the princes of the House of Bourbon were naturally timid; that they were brought up in a state of trembling, and that one must act accordingly with them and give them cause for fear. This former inmate of a convent succeeded so well with Louis that he did not notice that she was ugly, that she had an unnaturally long neck, and that her actions were those of a grenadier. She was tall, awkward, there was no agreeable feature about her, and it was said that her perspiration emitted a fetid odor. But she was all genius, and her ambition was so active and so energetic that she succeeded by allurements that were especially attractive to the late king in exciting the passion of love in him. She succeeded in having him adore her, and gradually she brought him to the point of yielding absolutely to her sway. It is known that she made such progress on his mind that it was only a question of time when she would be able to govern the king, the ministers, France and all Europe, on account of her character and extraordinary talents, as she had predicted in the presence of the nun of Port-Royal.

Such was the fondness of the king for Mme. de Vintimille that he overheard a conversation between the Marquis de Flavacourt and Vintimille in their apartments at Versailles concerning the king's passion. They were discussing the imperious character of Mme. de Vintimille, of the advanced age of Mme. de Mailly, of the ugliness of both of them, of the weakness and bad taste of the king. And their conversation ended with the statement that this liaison could not be of long duration. The apartment was situated directly beneath a terrace on which the king was promenading, and, hearing the talk, he held his head so as not to lose a single word.

Instead of becoming angry at this humiliating discourse, he listened and understood the true and exact situation of affairs which princes sometimes have the opportunity of hearing under such circumstances. But either because the truth offended him, or because he wished to profit by this occasion to hold the rod of fear over two gentlemen whom he could not punish openly without shocking public decency and decorum, the king, advancing further toward the tiles of the chimney, which allowed this disagreeable and unwonted talk to reach his ears, interrupted the conversation by shouting these formidable words, which disconcerted Vintimille and Flavacourt: " Will you be silent ? Do you hear me ? " Fleury, bitterly disappointed at seeing the king governed thus by Mme. de Vintimille, and in entire subjection to *two governesses*, as he said, had himself appreciated the necessity of a favorite, he had encouraged the choice of Mme. de Mailly. But he was afraid of the character of Mme. de Vintimille, and realizing from that time on that the amours of the king were incestuous, he determined to block them. Mme. de Vintimille, vindictive, like a woman, proud as the mistress of a sovereign, and naturally energetic, revenged herself on him by bringing him into ridicule, and secretly planning to have him dismissed. But a certain Abbé Brissard, preceptor of the nephews of Cardinal de Fleury, and afterward his confidential man, and one who was shrewd, exceedingly avaricious, and selling as many favors as he could (although after his death only eighteen hundred thousand francs were found in the bags which carpeted his room), determined, in order not to be displaced by the threatened downfall of the cardinal, to ruin Mme. de Vintimille. The occasion of her approaching confinement seemed favorable to undertake her poisoning.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Death and sketch of the Duke de la Trémoille, first gentleman chamberlain.—Anecdotes prior to the appointment of Duke de Fleury to this position.—Court cabals.—Intrigues of Cardinal de Fleury and the two favorites.—Cardinal de Fleury retires in a fit of sulks to Issy, as was his wont.—The alarm of the two sisters.—Anecdotes about Mme. de Mailly.—The cardinal in refusing a favor for his nephew compels Mme. de Vintimille to accord it to him.—Embarrassment of the king.—Fleury appointed first chamberlain.

THE Duke de la Trémoille having died of smallpox, some one had to be appointed to fill his vacant position. Louis and this noble had so thoroughly forgotten the wild indiscretions of youth, that they now devoted themselves to the sex, and in spite of some passing transient amours of La Trémoille, this noble and his wife, who idolized each other, had mutually promised to separate if they were afflicted with smallpox which was epidemic in Paris at that time, and which disease neither of them had had. Mme. de la Trémoille, who was the first to get the disease, was waited upon by her husband, who would not trust her in any other hands but his own. Mme. de la Trémoille recovered, and her husband, who had become worn out by waiting on her and acting as nurse, died of the disease. He was so lauded in all Paris and Europe for his noble self sacrifice, that there were women anxious to erect a temple to the honor of Hymen, with this epitaph :—

HERE LIES LOVE, MARTYR TO HYMEN.

La Trémoille, twenty-four years of age, left a daughter, and a son four years of age, for whom the three chamberlains, the Dukes de Mortemart, De Gesvres, d'Aumont, asked the fourth office which was left vacant by the father.

Mme. de Mailly and Mme. de Vintimille solicited this vacancy for the Duke De Luxembourg. Châtillon also was a candidate for the place. The cardinal, who sought it for his nephew, as soon as he learned that the court was divided into three factions, retired to Issy as was his custom for the purpose of obtaining it with more certainty.

In order to destroy the chances of the Duke de Luxembourg, Fleury told the king that his friends were urging him to ask for the position for his nephew, but that he was so overwhelmed with the king's kindnesses that he did not think of asking for this additional favor. On the other hand he begged his majesty to consider young La Trémoille. The king in order to destroy all chances of the cardinal's nephew securing the position, replied that he had thought of this nephew, but had realized that this additional favor to his family would bring him many enemies at court and therefore he had given up the idea.

The cardinal, astonished and little accustomed to such replies, did not care to ask for the office; at the same time he did not refuse it absolutely, for he was burning with the desire to procure it for his nephew. In this perplexity, he never made a single reference to the Duke de Luxembourg in all the letters which he wrote to the king. If an entirely different person should obtain that position and triumph over the young La Trémoille, whose mother he had almost promised the position, he begged His Majesty to accept his resignation as from that time on, he would be useless as a servant of the administration. At the same time he added that he was in need of rest and recreation. But the king, then dominated by his mistresses rather than by his preceptor, easily fathomed the true purpose of the cardinal; abandoning himself to his customary melancholy humor, this utterance escaped him: "I thought that the cardinal was devoted to me: but I learn that he is also very much devoted to his own advancement."

Mme. de Mailly and Mme. de Vintimille, on the other hand, openly spoke for Luxembourg. Mme. de la Trémoille was making a vigorous campaign in favor of her child and the king, undecided, and annoyed by the underhanded intrigues of his minister, of the two mistresses, of the princes of the blood, who were favoring Luxembourg, and displeased because the cardinal was trying to dispose of this most confidential office, was determined to favor Mme. de Mailly and wrote the cardinal, who had retired to Issy, that he would regret it if he were compelled to exact a duty from him which might be prejudicial to his health, adding that if his health really demanded it he might retire. The letter which contained this decision of the king was not posted and was left on the mantel-piece of Mme. de Mailly, who called her sister Vintimille to consult with her over this critical event.

For some days Mme. de Vintimille had been weaned from the party favoring the Duke de Luxembourg. The cardinal, who knew all that was going on, alarmed her, through a third person, by picturing the danger to which she was exposing, not only herself, but her sister if he were driven to extremes. Mme. de Vintimille, who felt that she might be dismissed herself, for she was not certain of the king's disposition towards her, and who in concert with d'Argenson had already attempted to cause the downfall of Fleury and substitute in his place a bishop (because since the time of Abbé Dubois, it was thought absolutely necessary that ecclesiastics should fill important offices of state), realized that a party crisis was at hand, and spoke to Mme. de Mailly in the following terms: "We have not a moment to lose; you must write the king at once and insist upon his appointing M. de Fleury. We might possibly succeed in defeating the cardinal, but if the cardinal determines to avenge himself, it is possible that we might be dismissed." It was determined that Mme. de Mailly should retire with the king that night for the purpose of securing the appointment of the Duke de Fleury, nephew of the cardinal.

The king found it very pleasant at that period to have a variety in his amusements, calling now one and now another of his well beloved mistresses. Now he mollified the sorrowful disposition of Mme. de Mailly, of whom he was often wearied, by abandoning her to her reflections, and again he appeared to be angry with Mme. de Vintimille for short periods, when she assumed too great a dictatorial sway over him. Thus the king passed his time in playing them against each other and stirring up rivalry between the two, somewhat after the fashion of his ministers who brought about antagonisms between the peers and parliament and between parliament and the clergy, in governing the realm of France. Ministers who have usurped the rights of people, and kings who have become the pliable instruments of their favorites and of their advisers, can work in no other way.

Mme. de Mailly, being entirely deprived of the right of engaging in business, especially where favors or offices were to be granted, completely dominated by her sister, Vintimille, and already having consented to be the instrument of the latter's ambition, was obliged to make delicate advances on her behalf with the king. The outcome of her venturesome proposals were dangerous and uncertain, she was very much embarrassed when compelled to sacrifice Luxembourg for the nephew of Fleury, and did not dare speak of the affair. The king, who saw her embarrassment, who observed the emotion of the princes of the blood and his minister, fortified and intrenched at Issy, whence he hurled equivocal letters, was as much embarrassed as the two sisters, and in fact, he was as much disturbed as was Fleury himself. He did not sleep. That evening he retired with Mme. de Mailly, who, alone, had succumbed to sleep. Her hair was dressed as during the day and decorated with all her diamonds as usual. The king aroused her and told her of his mind, troubled by the signing of the letter, which agreed to the retirement of the cardinal. But the letter had not yet been sent; it remained as yet on the mantel-piece in the room of his favorite. And Louis, who spoke to her in regard to the suppression of this letter, recalled the past services of his minister and the needs of the state. Mme. de Mailly, who was reassured, acknowleged that Fleury had, in reality, been a good minister and that the king would do well to destroy the letter, which contained his consent to Fleury's retirement. The king, satisfied, arose, burned the letter to the cardinal, retired and announced to the Duke de Fleury, the next day, that he was one of the chamberlains, with a brevet and a salary of four hundred thousand francs.

The most diplomatic finesse was still required of the old cardinal to diminish, as far as possible, his obligation for this new appointment. He worked with Orri, when his nephew took up the duties of office, telling him of the favor the king had just accorded him and showing him the letter of the king. The cardinal pretended to be surprised, repeated the news adding at every time that it could not be possible. "I forbid you," he said to him, "to inform any one until I have seen the king and had the order revoked." The Duke de Fleury replied that he had already publicly thanked the king. "Well," added the cardinal, "then I am compromised with all the princes." He went at once to tell the dauphin and madame that he had used every effort with the king to encourage the appointment of the son of La Trémoille, and assumed the attitude of a disheartened man. This caused Mme. Aléläide, who was very quick at repartee, to jest about it with Mme. de Tallard: "You say, madame, that we should compliment M. de Cardinal; he ought to be satisfied then, and yet see how disappointed he is." Fleury also visited the queen, who complimented him. Surrounded by quite a company at her dressing table, she ordered them to retire, and Fleury, out of breath and alone with her, seating himself, said : " Madame, the greatest misfortune has happened to me." The princess with the coolness she usually displayed when the cardinal greeted her with an insincere compliment, hushed him and pleasantly told him, shaking her head, " I see nothing disappointing for you in this news, sir ; " and turned the subject. Finally the cardinal wrote to Mme. de la Trémoille that the king had appointed the Duke de Fleury, his nephew, without his knowledge and that he would have opposed it if he had known about it, for he was very loath to place obstacles in the way of Mme. de la Trémoille.

Such is the story of the rise of the Fleury family at the Court of France. It cost the state nothing, and the cardinal, who had no inordinate ambition for his family, granted it only the most ordinary favors, when he might have made it powerful and wealthy. This whole family was composed of honorable people. Their family name was Rosset, their title Pérignan, but out of gratitude to the cardinal they took the name of Fleury from him. Although they were not distinguished in the nobility before the ministry of their uncle, their kindly characters, moderation, and the good services of the cardinal, offset their newly acquired fortune. We find neither verses nor songs directed against them. They kept the even tenor of their way, and rose without attracting undue attention, and without pomp, as did their uncle. From the rank of captain in the regiment of marines, the Marquis de Fleury passed to that of colonel of the regiment of Angoumoins, in 1731, and the Marquis de Pérignan was received as a chevalier of the order, four years afterwards. In 1736 he was made duke and peer of France, and was appointed governor of Lorraine in 1737. The Duchess de Fleury, who was alive in 1791, was an agreeable and amiable court-lady. In 1740 and in 1741 the Duke de Fleury, as we have just said, was appointed first chamberlain. Cardinal de Fleury is the only one of the powerful ministers who did not sacrifice the interests of state to the ambition of creating a powerful family. We shall see, however, on the other hand, certain favorites and ministers becoming leeches of the state. A faithful historian consigns the latter to infamy, and honorably mentions the others. We are faithful enough to the memory of the cardinal not to describe his faults without speaking also of his virtues.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Cardinal de Fleury and Mme. de Vintimille, both jealous, carefully watch each other.—Birth of M. de Vintimille.—Death of his mother.—Sorrow of the king.—He is for a long time tormented by her picture.—His gloomy character.—Intrigues of the court in their endeavor to give him new mistresses.—The king remains faithful to Mme. de Mailly.—He retires with her into the secret apartments.—Portrait of Meuse, his confidant and his favorite.—Stories of his private life in his inner household.—Jealousy of the court, and utterances against Meuse.—Jealousy of Maurepas.—Anecdotes.

MME. DE VINTIMILLE, already stunned by this secret triumph of the cardinal in his promotion of his nephew, was impatiently suffering under the yoke of the prelate, who was supercilious and overbearing toward her.

He made her feel that she was under obligation to him for not being dismissed. Impatient, haughty and shrewd, she quietly conspired to make him distasteful to Louis, and Fleury, who watched her quietly, seemed to be hopeful that she would die in her approaching confinement. The favorite and the cardinal feared each other and were constantly on the alert in this manner after the favor accorded to the Duke de Fleury in June, 1741.

The 8th of August following, the king left Mme. de Mailly, and all the other ladies who accompanied him, at Choisy with Mme. de Vintimille. Mme. de Vintimille had been enciente for eight months, and she was ill with a fever, accompanied by spasms. She was bled twice, and although the peculiar usage had been established that husbands could not come to Choisy when women were present there, nevertheless, Grammont, Coigni d'Ayen (marshal of France in 1791) and the two Meuses remained at Choisy. Luxembourg and Richelieu also returned there, and the king afterwards brought the wife of Marshal d'Estrées and Mme. de Ruffec to join them. We preserve all these names of the ladies and gentlemen at this place, because it is necessary to note those of the court, who were complaisant enough to do the things recorded.

In spite of these illnesses, the love of the king increased every day, but if the illness of the queen had estranged and separated him from her, that of Mme. de Vintimille seemed to make him still more amorous of her. He gave her a cook for the first time the evening before her confinement at Versailles, and he remained with her until two in the morning. At nine o'clock she was delivered of a fine large boy, whom the king took in his arms, and afterwards placed on a crimson velvet cushion, handling and examining him with the greatest care and pleasure, and as if trying to discover in him features that might be agreeable to him. He admired this child for a long time, and he gave it the name of Louis. This child lived as late as January, 1791. But his college mates afterwards changed his name to Demi-Louis, and this name followed him through life.

The king was so pleased at his birth that he wished to remain and dine in the very room with Mme. de Vintimille on that day. Together with the Dukes d'Ayen, Villeroy and with Meuse, he received the Archbishop of Paris there, when he came to pay a visit to the young mother. He obliged the putative father and grandmother to come there also. But even the presence of the king could not prevent a shout of laughter caused by the old marquis when, after dinner, he called the child *mon beau-petit-fils*, (step-grandson).

Although Mme. de Vintimille was easily delivered of her child after but an hour's illness, and although she was pronounced entirely cured on the 7th of September, 1741, the king was obliged hurriedly to send Silva from Paris a few days later on account of a terrible relapse. Senac, then a doctor of Saint-Cyr, was also summoned. The patient, terrified at the cruel pains that she suffered, called for her confessor, who was closeted with her for a long time. She died almost immediately thereafter, without any other sacrament, and her confessor, charged with missions that were doubtless very important, fell dead on entering the home of Mme. de Mailly to execute them. These unexpected events affected Louis so that he was obliged to take to his bed, half dead with terror and grief, and to have mass sung in his room. In his extreme sorrow, the Count de Noailles (living in 1791), was the only one who was admitted to his room. The queen, who anxiously desired to come and console him, could not obtain this favor, and Mme. de Mailly, who felt as badly as the king, went and crept into the bed of the wife of Marshal d'Estrées.

The body of Mme. de Vintimille was left in the place where she died because the king wished to have her portrait taken. By his order, also, a post-mortem was held, for it was openly charged that she had been poisoned. A clot of blood was found in the brain, which seemed, however, to be but a natural cause of death. No announcement was made of what was ascertained by the post-mortem examination. It was only said that a most extraordinary infection was manifest. The mistake was made of placing her body in a coach where she was indecently abandoned for some time to the mockery of passersby. This was a result of the great excitement that her death occasioned, the terror of the king and the whole court, and the indecent and ridiculous custom of hastily removing those who die in the palaces of our kings, as if death would otherwise seize the living.

If there is a single custom worthy of our kings it is the one that propriety and nature prescribe in such cases, and both throw blame on these inhuman frenzies.

The king was never so affected as on this occasion. Mme. de Mailly, who was naturally tender-hearted, went many times to weep at the tomb of her sister, praying to God all alone in the church and sighing piteously. The king for a long time refused to take any part in the new doings of the times, and only spoke to the nobles to eulogize his favorite. He had his casket brought him; took out his love letters, (there were more than a thousand of them) and read them all, and he insisted that she was not so wicked as had been claimed.

After that, two powerful parties that aspired to the complete control of the king's mind, which Mme. de Vintimille had gained complete possession of, were formed at Versailles. The first was called the party of Noailles, which had in the presence of the king, the father and two sons (both of whom were living in 1791) and Madame the Countess de Toulouse; and in the presence of the queen, the Ladies de Villars and d'Armagnac. This party sustained the cause of Mme. de Mailly for whom the king seemed to have but an ordinary affection.

Bachelier, first valet-de-chambre, was at the head of the other party. This Bachelier, who had great power over the king, whom he had brought up, so to speak, from childhood, wished to bring young girls to him, and this advice was sustained by the whole court. But Louis, who had adored Mme. de Vintimille, whom he loved more than he had any other woman and who could never love any one else with the same fervor after his experience with her, only talked on religious subjects.

He was terrified by the unexpected death of Mme. de Vintimille, who died without extreme unction. The frightful thought of poisoning continually tormented him. Timid on account of this circumstance; hesitating about seeking new loves, he persisted in his attachment for Mme. de Mailly. He determined to give her a secret apartment above his and desired to give a public appearance of extreme decorum in order that he might not excite any jealousy nor any dangerous attention toward her. Here are some stories relative to his private life after the death of Mme. de Vintimille.

Dining with Mme. de Mailly and with Meuse one evening, he asked the latter, if he would not like to have a pretty apartment. "I would be very grateful for it," replied Meuse. "You will have one," added the king, "above my little hall." Meuse could not thank the king in his confusion and surprise at being lodged so near the private apartments of the king.

"Very well," said the king, "I shall shut up all communication with the other rooms. You will have just a small antechamber, a second antechamber to be used as a dining-room, a pretty little bed-room, a sitting-room, an office, a kitchen, a wardrobe and another wardrobe for a bed-room; but you will not sleep there." Meuse understood thoroughly what the king meant by these words.

The king then added: "I will give you a key for your apartment to open the false door. You will call it your home, you will dine Coigny and Luxembourg there on their return from the army, and I desire that you dine at home ordinarily. What do you want for your dinner?"

Meuse acknowledged that he liked good cheer, and asked for a good soup, a good piece of beef, two entrées, a roast, and two side dishes each day. "Well, you shall have all that," replied the king; "but how much will you need to draw for all this? For you will invite me to dine often and you will be called upon to invite me to supper especially." Meuse, who was afraid to set too small a sum, said to Mme. de Mailly: "Help me, I pray;" and asked fifteen hundred francs a month. The king, who was always afraid of the complaints of the cardinal, did not think that this was too little, for the new house and for its valet-de-chambre. Mme. de

Mailly passed her days in this apartment, where the king was only served by his officers, a cook and a butler. For after the death of Mme. de Vintimille the pleasures in the private apartments of the king were broken by frequent and profound meditations. The king then spoke of religion only and when he ceased to speak of religious topics his life was tortured by reflections, which overcame Mme. de Mailly and Meuse, who was their common confidant. The king told him one day with great soberness: "I am not at all displeased at suffering rheumatism and if you knew the reason for it you would not disapprove. I am suffering in expiation of my sins." Nevertheless he passed the next night with Mme. de Mailly. Nothing could be more sad or sorrowful than these little suppers when the conscience of the king was disturbed after the death of Mme. de Vintimille.

Another time, being sick and being compelled in the evening to limit himself to a diet of milk alone, he persisted in fasting the next day, saying, "We should not commit sins in all things." He had visited the services, on holy days, several times during the year, and had regularly attended Easter services until publicity had been given to his love affair with Mme. de Vintimille. Then he gradually gave them up and soon dispensed entirely with this Christian duty, even during the Easter festivals; a thing which determined the dauphin to avoid popular comparison by performing his duties early in the morning on a week day in his own parish.

Mme. de Mailly for a long time shed sincere tears over the death of her sister and tried to alleviate the sorrow of the king, who wished to take particular care of the child. The other ladies, whom the king honored with his attentions, or who had special liaisons with him, solaced his sorrow and engaged and diverted his melancholy mind. Mme. la Countess de Toulouse and Mlle. de Charolais used every means in their power to distract his moments of ennui and inaction. They were sometimes invited to parties; they contributed to increasing the pleasures of the king; they even went to Choisy to engage in hunting parties where the court indulged in diversions much more noisy than at Versailles (where etiquette was still scrupulously observed), and this tended to break up the former wearisome monotony of the court. But the king was always so meditative after the death of Mme. de Vintimille, that on the last day of the year 1741, speaking of the ceremonies of a burial, which he loved to converse about with Mme. de Mailly, both of them were moved to tears while at table. Mme. de Mailly could not staunch the flow of tears, and the king left the table at once to conceal his emotion.

They both agreed that some day they would have to separate and die, and the thought of death was too dreadful, after that of Mme. de Vintimille, for them to calmly discuss it. Meuse in vain sought to distract the monarch. The cardinal had brought him up in such fear of a hereafter that he could not help manifesting this fear. The works of modern philosophy, which gave intellects an entirely different character after this epoch, were not in existence as yet, and the king had not received an education favorable to the change in feelings which these bring to the mind.

The courtiers, who kept away from these secret and intimate conversations, also contributed to increase the melancholy humor of Louis. Jealous of the favors of the king, and blaming the peculiar complaisance of Meuse, they said of him that his duties in the presence of the king were not suitable to a man of his rank, and ridiculed his assiduity and his attachment. Meuse, who felt this, was a lieutenant-general, and eagerly sought permission to go into active service, but the king, who had become settled in this manner of life, evaded his request, promising to have him enter the service the following year.

After a year of anxious expectation and restraint, Meuse asked the king to keep the promise he had made him, but he said that he had changed his mind, and did not wish him to leave him. Meuse, melancholy and sad, insisted, and the king said to him: "Meuse, you are no longer young; you are not in good health. Do you wish to be Marshal of France? You shall be. Can I not make you a duke and a peer, a chevalier of the order? Be quiet, and do not afflict yourself, as you appear to be doing." All these words were preserved in writing.

Saddened and grieved by the courtiers; kept in service with the king; detested by Cardinal de Fleury; persecuted by the jealousy of Maurepas, the declared enemy of the mistresses, and of all who pandered to the passions of the king, Meuse was very unhappy. And Mme. de Mailly, recounting to the Countess of Toulouse a part of the conversation of the king, held in the presence of La Froulaye, reported it to Maurepas. The latter, malicious, facetious, and a witty story teller, disseminated the story in Versailles and in Paris, revealing to his intimate friends all the complaisances of the courtiers. The cardinal, who knew all, reproached the king for demeaning and vilifying the first dignities of the state by making them a recompense for those who ministered to his pleasures. The king complained of this to Meuse and to Mme. de Mailly, who vented her spite on Maurepas by bitter invectives. The king, who needed the witty sayings of Maurepas for his diversion, and the complaisance of Meuse to pass away the time in his secret apartments, answered: "I know that Maurepas' frivolity in many things may be reproached," and he cited instances; but he added, "that his frivolity did not trench on serious things. Maurepas knows things that no one has been informed of. I know them as he does, and no one shall hear of them." "But this is very extraordinary," replied Mme. de Mailly, "if he were not discreet on questions of this nature, he would surely be insane." All these words were preserved, although uttered in very secret tête-à-têtes, and the author of these Memoirs has taken them word for word from the correspondence of that period.

Thus passed the years 1739, 1740, and 1741, in the inner life of the court. The extreme terror gradually vanished; but the fears of death never entirely left the king. His pusillanimous education and the horrors of the death of Mme. de Vintimille were the causes of it. But it was said, that even before his love for this latter woman, the king, devoted to the Countess de Mailly alone, rose in the night, and on his knees manifested his contrition, and then retired with her again? Mme. de Mailly, converted, has confessed this to one of her relatives, from whom this story was obtained. She also confessed to another distinguished military man of her family, who lived in 1791, and who was honored by the nation for his virtues and his merit, the story of the king, and his relations to his favorite, which we have told above.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Fleury exiles Mme. de Prie, the former favorite of M. le Duc, prime minister, to Courbépine.—The tragic end of Mme. de Prie.—M. le Duc, the prime minister, exiled to Chantilly.

MME. DE PRIE had a devilish character in a beautiful body and concealed under an angelic countenance. She was seductive, but under the most beautiful exterior, she hid a black character ready for any treason. She engaged in all affairs, honest and dishonest; her only question was whether they would procure her money. She secretly engaged in a commission in grain, a thing which paved the way to her own disgrace and to that of M. le Duc, and also prepared the way for the famous famine, which was one of the results of her speculation. She sold favors, dignities, offices, and positions, and in a short time became the object of hatred and scorn of all France, which always had detested the power of mistresses, as it had that of favorite courtiers. Fleury, as we have seen above, burning with a secret ambition to become prime minister, and already guiding the genius and mind of Louis, made preparations, far in advance, for the ruin of M. le Duc. His special jealousy was incited by the favors that M. le Duc gave to his creatures, and it was especially displeasing to him to be thwarted by Mme. de Prie.

At first he compelled M. le Duc to grant offices in his presence and while the king was near, that he might have an influence in their disposal. M. le Duc and Mme. de Prie, wearied by this species of servitude, endeavored to escape it by employing the queen, who had recently arrived in France, and brought about their own downfall. The queen, who was unfortunate enough to allow herself to be enveigled into this intrigue, not only did not succeed, but the unsuccessful attempt was the cause of all her sufferings during the ministry of Fleury.

It is known that M. le Duc was exiled to Chantilly. As to Mme. de Prie, nothing could equal her fury when she learned the news. She was at that time in the queen's company, playing a harpsichord with great gayety. A courier from the court acquainted her with the disastrous news, which suddenly drove her into transports of anger. She rushed to the queen, and reproaching her for not having foreseen and preventing this catastrophe, said to her insolently: "Madame, will you allow M. le Duc, to whom you owe the crown of France, to suffer the disgrace which has just befallen him? Leave, this moment, madame, and ask the king on your knees, if necessary, for the restoration of this prince, to whom you are under such great obligations. Remember that we made you queen; this is the time to show proper gratitude." The queen confused, timid, and embarrassed, went and stammered some useless words to the king, and the result was a very curt order to execute the commands of the Bishop of Fréjus, as those of the king himself. A torrent of useless tears followed.

Mme. de Prie, waiting, was arrested by an office for the royal body guard, who conducted her to her country seat of Courbépine, in Normandy, near Bernay, from whence she wrote letters to her friends and to M. le Duc, which breathed a spirit of firmness and assurance.

After a year of solitude and intriguing correspondence, she asked for permission to go to the watering place at Forges, where many court people were to visit. She thought she might be able to secure her return to court, and the restoration of M. le Duc to the good graces of the king, by intrigues, that is to say, she sought to bring about a counter revolution. Firm as a rock in his position, Cardinal de Fleury did not deem it necessary to refuse this favor; but the seductive enterprises of Mme. de Prie and her favors, were scorned by the nobles of the court, who were taking the waters at Forges. She returned to Courbépine, therefore, without having accomplished her purpose.

She had already become devoted to a provincial gentleman, by the name of Brèvedent, a witty and naturally amorous gentleman, whom she had subjected to her orders by permitting him to hope for the favors of love. Brèvedent, who for a long time was in a state of suspense, increased his attentions day by day and even demeaned himself by assuming the duties of a valet in the antechamber of his mistress. One morning Mme. de Prie rang the bell later than usual and Brèvedent, who was waiting very patiently in the vestibule, appeared before her to execute her orders. "I have passed a very bad night; I must rest; leave me alone, but give me that little vial;" (pointing to a small vial). Mme. de Prie took the vial with assurance, swallowed its contents and replacing the bottle said: "Here, Brèvedent, throw this vial in the fire; I am indebted to it for all the happiness that I am going to enjoy for eternity, the happiness of being freed from the sorrows of this world." In dismay, Brèvedent, realizing that she had swallowed poison, threw himself on his knees beside her, and entreated her to take remedies. "No, it is with reflection and mature consideration that I have determined upon shortening my days. Leave me alone; I am going to end my life in a fitting way by calling a priest." She confessed, and adding hyprocisy to suicide, she tranquilly received the sacraments, which she had often profaned.

Mme. de Prie suffered terrible pains for three days, the poison not having the effect that it should have produced. Her cries were heard outside the castle a quarter of a mile away. Terrible convulsions preceded her death.

Such was the end of Mme. de Prie, most wicked and most false of women. She died in 1728.

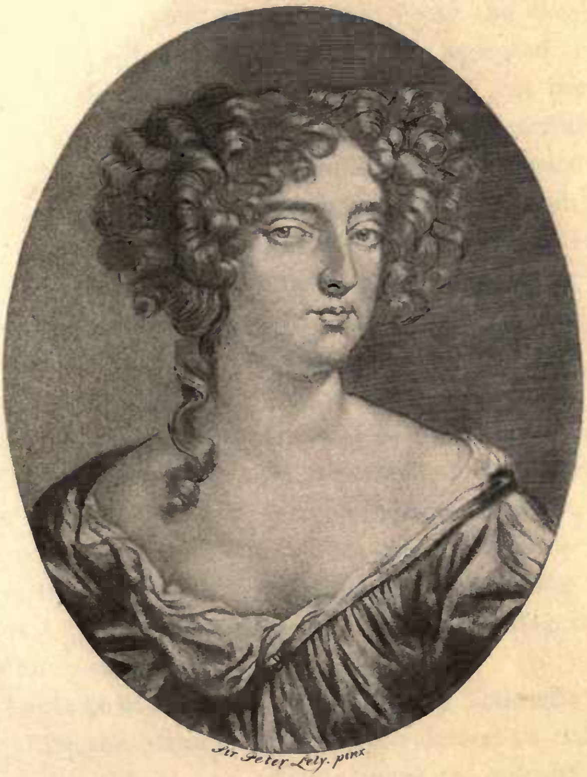
CHAPTER XLIX.

Death of Mme. de Mazarin, grandmother of Mme. de Mailly, of Mme. de La Tournelle, and of Mme. de Flavacourt.—Maurepas, his wife and his heirs, drive these two last named ladies from the house.—A peculiar strategy resorted to by Mme. de Flavacourt. —A character sketch.—She is driven by Maurepas from the home of her grandmother, and being without a father and mother she goes and takes a seat in a sedan chair in the midst of the court of the princes.—The Duke de Gesvres finds her there and brings her to the court by order of the king, with her sister De La Tournelle.—She pardons M. and Mme. de Maurepas.—Resentment of Mme. de La Tournelle.—The origin of the open enmity between Mme. de La Tournelle and M. and Mme. de Maurepas.—Neutrality of Mme. de Flavacourt.

MME. LA DUCHESS DE MAZARIN, lady-in-waiting to the queen, died in September, 1742, at fifty-four years of age. She had quarreled for a long time with Mme. de Mailly, a circumstance that kept up the unfriendliness between the sisters who were favorites of the king, then reigning at court, and the other three sisters who were not yet presented. Cardinal de Fleury, who knew that she was an intimate friend of the queen, alarmed lest the place might be given to a lady to be feared on account of her intellect and influence, sought a woman for the place who was without ambition and first mentioned Mme. de Clermont-Tonnerre. He was not deceived in this choice; she thanked him saying that being devoted in heart and soul to Mme. la Duchess of Orleans, she could not make up her mind to leave her however honorable was the

DUCHESS DE MAZARIN

PHOTO-ETCHING AFTER THE PAINTING BY SIR PETER LELY



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position they deigned to offer her and which she did not merit. On the refusal of this lady, Mme. de Villars, old, retired and a hermit for almost fifteen years, was sought. She also refused; but the queen to please the cardinal added her urgent request, and she finally accepted.

Mme. de Mazarin had scarcely drawn her last breath when Maurepas, her heir, guided by his wife, determined to drive Mme. de La Tournelle and Mme. de Flavacourt, whom the deceased had received at her home, from the house. The husband of Mme. de Flavacourt was serving in the army. In this interesting situation Mme. de Maurepas ordered them to leave the house at once; if they asked for a glass of water, they were to be refused; they must at once seek another asylum. Mme. de La Tournelle, darting fire and fury from her eyes, called Heaven and earth to witness against this cruel treatment and breathed forth vengeance. Mme. de Flavacourt, on the other hand, reasoned differently and spoke with her customary tranquillity concerning her position. She thought of a very peculiar stratagem to better her position.

As a matter of fact, whilst Mme. de La Tournelle was going from the home of one of her relatives to that of another, or visiting her acquaintances to recount her cruel treatment, Mme. de Flavacourt ordered a sedan chair which she entered and ordered carried to Versailles, to the midst of the court of the ministers in front of the castle, saying: "I am young; I am without father or mother; my husband is away; my relatives abandon me; without doubt Heaven will not forsake me."

Placed in the middle of the court between Heaven and earth she opened the curtains, dismissed the porters and awaited heavenly favors. Indifferent people passed her way without paying attention to her peculiar dilemma; but the Duke de Gesvres, passing by, opened the portiers and in astonishment cried out: "Ah, Mme. de Flavacourt, what brings you here; do you know that your grandmother has just died?"

"How do I happen to be here?" replies the witty woman; "well are you aware that M. Maurepas and his wife have expelled us, my sister La Tournelle and myself for being adventuresses? They doubtless feared lest we might be a burden to them. My sister La Tournelle is gone, I know not where; as for me, here I am in the hands of Providence."

The Duke de Gesvres, still more astonished at this singular situation, begging her to wait patiently for a few minutes, flew to the king, led him to a window and pointed out the solitary chair, which was so singularly placed in the center of the court and said to him: "Doubtless Your Majesty sees that chair down there? well! for two hours it has held Mme. de Flavacourt."

The king, as astonished as the Duke de Gesvres, answered: "But who left it there?" The duke replied: "It is the work of her ingenius mind; she has been dismissed by Mme. de Maurepas, and she thought that her only course was to put herself in God's keeping."

"Bring her at once," replied the king, in emotion, "give her an apartment, and let her sister La Tournelle be brought also." Thus Mme. de Flavacourt did not long await the favor of heaven; messengers came to get her, and presented her to Louis, who joked with her, and gave her an apartment in the new wing which had been occupied by Mme. de Mailly, her sister. The first vacant place as lady-in-waiting was promised her, and Mme. de La Tournelle was given the apartment of Vauréal, Bishop of Rennes.

Mme. de Flavacourt, so interesting in character, an instance of which is given in this anecdote, was still more interesting in beauty of feature and eyes. She was a perfect brunette; she had the best figure and was the tallest lady of the court; she had an amiable character, a decorous deportment and a noble air, and, more than that, she was always good-natured, seeking to please with kindnesses and with good humor.

The five sisters had been divided into two parties; that of Mme. de Vintimille was devoted to Mme. de Mailly, and the aims of this party were to keep Mlle. de Montcarvel, Mme. de La Tournelle, and Mme. de Flavacourt away from court. These last-named ladies had not yet been presented at court, and they desired to go to court with all the more reason, because there was no place to which they could not aspire to rise by birth. But notwithstanding they were the most beautiful of the sisters, still they could not please Louis, although he was said to love the blood of the De Mailly family. And the two sisters, already presented and favored by the king, were therefore the favored rivals of their younger sisters, who aspired to the same honors.

But Mme. de Flavacourt did not take part in these rivalries. She had the beautiful and kindly qualities of her sisters without having their moral or physical defects. Placed beside the king, she not only preserved herself by a prudent and circumspect conduct from contagion of the moral leprosy of court, but she also refused to be in league with her sister, La Tournelle, against M. and Mme. de Maurepas, who had offended her. The proud La Tournelle in vain told her that an insult of this kind was public, and to pardon it would be to demean herself. Mme. de Flavacourt replied that if Maurepas and his wife made satisfactory excuses she would forget all. As a matter of fact, Maurepas did endeavor to apologize for his conduct to Mme. de Flavacourt. He told her that what had taken place was only a misunderstanding, and he was kindly heard. Mme. de La Tournelle scorned his excuses and his explanations, and haughtily, as well as angrily, told him that she would injure him whenever and wherever opportunity presented itself. And the most bitter enmity reigned from that time on between the minister and his wife on one hand, and the beautiful La Tournelle on the other. Every day she became prouder in her conduct toward them, and especially when she ascertained that her beauty had already attracted the attention of the king.

Such were the early doings of Mme. de La Tournelle and Mme. de Flavacourt on their first arrival at court. The former became devoted to the king; the second avoided seduction by a prudent and circumspect conduct. We shall see her visiting the court of the king in the company of the queen at Metz, when the dying prince exiled Mme. de La Tournelle and Mme. de Lauraguais to ease his conscience, which is the actual proof of the avowed prudence of Mme. de Flavacourt. We are glad to know that during her lifetime in 1792 she received the reward that history accords to virtue. We are also pleased at being able to refute the malice which attributed her conduct to the threats of the Marquis de Flavacourt. This gentleman, naturally a thorough military man, somewhat gruff and ungallant, may have said that he would kill his wife if she were unfaithful to him; but she, whose prudence was so well known and illustrated by the facts that I have just reported, did not have to be terrified into right conduct.

CHAPTER L.

The rise of the House of d'Aiguillon.—The opposition of the peers of France.—The rise and character of the Duke d'Agenois, afterwards a celebrated minister.—He loves Mme. de La Tournelle.—The king also loves her.—Intrigues and character of the Duke de Richelieu, favorite of Louis XV.—History of his love affairs.—His conduct toward women.—He serves the king, and is served by him in his love intrigues.—Stratagems and plots to thwart the courtship of Mme. de La Tournelle and the Duke d'Agenois, and to help on the liaisons between Louis and that lady.

THE younger branch of the House of Richelieu had been urging the government for several years to renew, in its favor, the letters patent of the duchy formerly belonging to the estates of d'Aiguillon. The ministers had replied, during the regency, that the king was unwilling to create peers prior to his majority, but that the titles could be given in charge of the chancellor in the meantime. Without thinking of the favor [promised four dukes were created, and M. le Duc, having become prime minister, replied to Count d'Agenois that the king did not wish to increase their number.

D'Agenois was burning with the desire to make his father a duke and a peer, that he might one day inherit the title and that it might become hereditary in his family. He had been well loved by Mme. la Princess de Conti, and he was skillful enough to obtain her favor in securing permission from Cardinal de Fleury, who had become prime minister, to have the case presented to parliament. The cardinal granted permission to do this;

but it awakened the opposition of the Bishops de Laon, Beauvais and Noyon, peers of France, and the Dukes de Sully, de Luynes, de Saint-Simon, de la Rochefoucauld, de Rohan, de Chabot, de Luxembourg, d'Estrées, de Mortemart, de Gesvres, de Béthune, de Boufflers, de Villars, de Berwick, de Biron, de la Rocheguion, d'Humieres, de Lorges, and de Châtillon, who plead against d'Agenois and who even reproached him for calling himself Wignerot. Le Normand delivered a very telling address in his behalf; Aubry pleaded for the dukes; and in spite of the opposition of Gilbert, the attorney-general, d'Aiguillon won his case and the Count d'Agenois his son, also was made a duke.

Devoted to Mme. de La Tournelle he was so well beloved by her at the time the king conceived a passion for her, that she was heard to say that she could not understand how she could fail in her fidelity to the Duke d'Agenois even for a king. This lover, indeed, had all the qualities suitable to bring about and nourish a love passion. His features were most interesting and his mind was liberal and deep. His ambition and the king's order for him to leave for the army, could only interrupt, not destroy a liaison so well cemented. Louis, affected by the beauty of Mme. de La Tournelle, confided his feelings to the Duke de Richelieu, asked his advice. The latter acknowledged the necessity of sending d'Agenois to the army to bring about a favorable diversion and separate the two lovers.

The Duke de Richelieu, so celebrated by his talents in the art of gallantry, was at that time the only one among the courtiers capable of bringing this affair to a successful issue. The particular friendship for the prince, the special bent of his mind, the deep study that he had made of female character, (and always at their expense) his experience in the art of fathoming their minds, and of exciting their passions, seemed to have made the man, for the occasion. From the age of seventeen years he had followed these very delicate intrigues. During the minority of Louis in 1791, he had carried on some very dangerous ones. The mother of Louis, the daughter of the regent and several royal princesses had made him celebrated, and from that time on up to the year 1742 he had so perfected his talent that he became an indispensable confidant of the king. His manner was peculiar to him alone, and he had such a happy tact, that Louis, whom he amused by the recital of his old-time adventures, was assured of the successful conquest of Mme. de La Tournelle, if the duke undertook to further it.

Several stories are told of him, which corroborate the fidelity of the portrait which we have just drawn of him, and especially one which concerns Mme. de ——— (who lived in 1790) is pertinent and very interesting. The Duke de Richelieu was loved by her, and although he was suspicious of her without being jealous, he had great desire to prove her fidelity. In order to succeed he inspired Durfort with the same curiosity with which he was burning. Both of them tempted the virtue of their respective mistresses. The mistress of the Duke de Duras succumbed to the attacks of Richelieu, and the Duke de Richelieu's was not more hard-hearted.

A still more interesting anecdote but less satisfactory to the fair sex was that of Mme. de La Poplinière. The story is so well known that I will only mention it casually so that I may not fail to characterize with truth, the kind of intellect that Louis was to make use of in negotiations relative to his love affairs. M. de La Poplinière was one of those loving, jealous husbands, who did not permit assiduous visits from the Duke de Richelieu. But this courtier, whose gallantry was still more ingenius than the jealousy of La Poplinière, played an extremely shrewd trick on him. He rented the next house and in the absence of La Poplinière, he had a passage made through the wall, and, as his chimney abutted on that of Mme. de La Poplinière, he substituted an iron plate sealed in the wall, and movable, which readily yielded to the will of the Duke de Richelieu and the aforesaid lady.

I could not begin to tell the pleasant, ingenius and malicious acts, which characterized the Duke de Richelieu. The majority of the women of the court were depraved by his corrupting influence to such an extent that they even boasted of their love for him. His love letters acquaint us with the fact that he reproached them and stirred up rivalries and discord among them in order to conquer them. All the beauty and pleasures that a sultan can gather in his seraglio and subject to his power, the Duke de Richelieu received freely and without jealousy at court, during the regency of the Duke of Orleans. We shall not expose the favorites still living to opprobrium; but let us go back to the early youth of the Duke de Richelieu, let us open those packets on which he wrote in his own hand this legend: "Letters for the same day, which I have not had time to read." They were not opened in fact until 1788, and that is one reason that we do not publish them until to-day although we have already spoken of the reception of the duke at the academy.

Note of Mme. d'Averne. "If you wish, and you have no other engagement for this evening come at half-past twelve. M. of Orleans will suspect nothing; he is persuaded that I am watched, and thinks me too ill to receive any one. If you come, send no reply."

Note of Mme. Le Gendre. "I am in despair. It is eight days since I have seen you and I am still waiting. In vain have I given the signal, it has not brought you. If you do not come tonight, I shall die of sorrow and of jealousy."

The notes of Mme. de La —— of de Gontaut and of De Goesbriant are of the same nature; but that of Mme. de Villeroy is so original that we have deemed it fitting to preserve it here. It is dated December 13, 1720.

"I compliment you M. Academician on your discourse of yesterday, which, it seems to me, was very successful. I would have been pleased to have been present and my heart was palpitating for three hours. I do not dare to hope that a man all engrossed by sciences would care to come this evening to visit a poor, ignorant person like me, who can only say in an uncouth manner: 'I adore you.'"

Note of Mlle. de Charolais. "Knowing the facility of your mind in planning things which are displeasing to me, I thought that you would entertain my sister often because that would displease me. It is too light for me to see you, unless I know whether it will grow darker; but to please you I will say that I cannot receive you this evening. I have already heard you as well as your address praised a great deal."

It must be true, doubtless, that Mlle. de Charolais, was that evening the preferred lady, or that the Duke de Richelieu was more interested in her notes than the others; for the latter was the only one that was unsealed in 1788. The other letters of this date expressed an unbridled passion for him and an extreme jealousy in all the women, as well as bitter despair when he left them, but they showed little love in the fickle young fellow, and little respect for conjugal faithfulness. These women did not blush at loving him; he himself enjoyed the fame and notoriety shed by his strange adventures. Finally the women of the court were so contaminated by him and his example that it was commonly said of the women of the court who loved their husbands, that they loved like a bourgeois (vivre bourgeoisement). Historians, who have modesty and shame, and free and virtuous people call these gallantries disgraceful; France, the slave of its kings and its courtiers, called them brilliant.

The stories that we have just read describe the Duke de Richelieu so well that we can draw no better picture of him. But if the laws of history have dictated this truth, we shall describe with the same fidelity the part of these memoirs devoted to his military career, his bold and valorous enterprises, the brilliancy of his successes and the resources of his active, penetrating and painstaking mind in time of peril. The Duke de Richelieu never belied his character; he was always the same, whether in private, whether in the embassy at Vienna, whether at Mahon or at Gênes. Boldness, wit and brilliant successes always characterized his military exploits and his private life as a courtier. For this reason the king could find no more faithful or capable confidant to second him in his pleasures, without demeaning himself. For the king, himself, returned him the same service, as far as the majesty of his person permitted him to do so. The style of the respective letters of the monarch and the favorite, gives us an idea, moreover, that if the Duke de Richelieu was an accomplished panderer, the king also knew how to secretly divest himself of his royal majesty and put himself on a level with him. The Duke de Richelieu, endowed with all these talents, and thoroughly convinced of the affection of the king for him, left the court for some time, for the puprose of separating the Duke d'Agenois and Mme. de La Tournelle. Let us follow the progress of these intrigues, and see how he managed to bring it to a successful conclusion.

CHAPTER LI.

The intrigues of the Duke de Richelieu to separate Mme. de La Tournelle from his nephew, d'Agenois, and how he encouraged a liaison between the king and her.—Strange stratagem of a lady of Languedoc, who won the love of this d'Agenois.—The intercepted letters sent to Mme. de La Tournelle, who listens to the king.—The dismissal of Mme. de Mailly is promised her.—Fleury and Maurepas in league to circumvent Mme. de La Tournelle and retain Mme. de Mailly at court.—Pusillanimity of the queen.—Mme. de Mailly gives her place to her sister.

IT was easy enough for the Duke de Richelieu to spy upon the passion of his nephew for Mme. de La Tournelle and to surround him in every direction with traps. Believing that a diversion would be favorable to his plans, he sent for a woman from Languedoc, whom he had loved at Montpellier during the time of the preceding history. And having initiated her into the love mysteries of the king and instructed her concerning the hard-heartedness of Mme. de La Tournelle towards the prince, he pointed out to her the necessity of attracting the faithful d'Agenois to herself, since he made the king so unhappy. This woman, full of activity, ambition and enterprise, burned with the desire to make her beauty famous in the capital and play a rôle there, and Richelieu presented her the means to do it; but the conquest of the beautiful d'Agenois was the first condition.

The lady, greatly surprised, asked nothing better than success for this first condition, which would bring under her sway the most beautiful noble of the court. She therefore sharpened her wits and prepared for the attack. Beautiful as day, born in a province where the sex is still more voluptuous and inclined to love than in the north of France, she already had served her apprenticeship in libertinism with the Duke de Richelieu. The Duke d'Agenois, kept away from Mme. de La Tournelle by interested parties, was the first to approach her; the lady willingly submitted to a conquest and all seemed so natural to the good d'Agenois that he felt very fortunate to have a good woman smitten with love for him and guilty of an infidelity carefully concealed from the Duke de Richelieu. She wrote love letters in concert with the uncle. The nephew replied to them; but his style seemed to be still burdened and restrained by his old sworn fidelity to the beautiful La Tournelle, whom he had left at Paris. The woman of Languedoc, disconcerted, wrote again and again, multiplying her love letters and increasing her passion, devotion and love for the purpose of receiving more energetic expressions from him. From one letter to the other d'Agenois kept increasing his passionate expressions and finally wrote very decisive and explicit declarations. The Duke de Richelieu sent them to the king to acquaint him with the success of the stratagem and Louis placed these letters in the hands of Mme. de La Tournelle as signs of the fidelity of her faithful d'Agenois, who was both the beginning and the end of love, said to her in an ironical tone: "Oh, the beautiful note which La Châtre has! See what the post brings me." Mme. de La Tournelle, in shame and in despair, exonerated the imprudent one; and the king, to distract her, invited her to come to Choisy with the Countess de Mailly, her sister, and continually breathed in her ear promises of unceasing love.

Mme. de Mailly, who was aware of this, who had pardoned the king, who had even, out of love for him, concealed his infidelity with Mme. de Vintimille, complained bitterly. From complaints she went to reproaches and from that it was but a step to an open rupture. She remembered all that she had suffered and all that she had hidden in her heart during the reign of her sister, and she did not wish to fall under the yoke of Mme. de La Tournelle, whom she did not love, for she had a proud and imperious disposition. Moreover, perfidous letters came, which engaged Mme. de La Tournelle to listen favorably to the suggestions of Louis. But she refused to share the heart of the king with her sister; she demanded that she be dismissed; that she even lose her position with the queen; and we shall soon see that the Duke de Richelieu and d'Argenson joined forces to obtain the consent of the kind Mme. de Mailly to sacrifice herself in order to facilitate the rise of Mme. de La Tournelle. But how was this disgrace to be executed without causing a sensation in a court, where, in spite of the profound silence as to the known will of the king, there would inevitably be disapproval of the ruin of an adored favorite, who was secretly sustained by the ministers on account of her kind character, and especially by Cardinal de Fleury and Maurepas, who were then so well loved by the king?

These two ministers, already aware of the new passion of the monarch, united their efforts to thwart it. They first thought of the plan of preventing Mme. de La Tournelle from having a place at court by giving her one with the queen that the king had promised, which would give her a stability and influence with Louis. The queen, who knew of this promise, was a witness of the reception that the king had given to the abandoned sisters; and who always endeavored to please her husband, wrote to Cardinal de Fleury, asking for the vacant place for Mme. de La Tournelle, by the exchange of Mme. de Villars, who had become lady of the bed chamber at the death of Mme. de Mazarin. No greater hint was necessary for Fleury to avoid granting a request, which would reunite the three sisters and give them the confidence of the prince, which he wanted for himself exclusively, for he remembered the uneasiness occasioned by the power of Mme. de Vintimille.

Maurepas, who expected that Mme. de La Tournelle would seek revenge, plotted with the cardinal. Both of them ordered their secretaries and clerks to search all the archives and endeavor to find amongst the commissions of the eldest court-ladies, some writing or promise of reversion of a position as court-lady, it mattered not in whose favor, provided they could prevent the sisters from securing the places. It was discovered in the commissions of Duchess de Villars, that there was a clause, which read as follows: "If this lady should die or should retire, this place is to be preserved for the marshall's wife."

Then the cardinal and Maurepas, employing underhanded means, compelled the queen to write to the cardinal again, not in behalf of Mme. de La Tournelle as she had already done, but of the wife of Marshal de Villars. This lady, who fathomed the whole scheme and who had, moreover, at least a little pride left, and who no longer desired to take part in any intrigues, refused to aid in the unjust exclusion of Mme. de Flavacourt and Mme. de La Tournelle.

Maurepas and Fleury, exasperated at not receiving the assistance of Mme. de Villars and depending as before on the clause of reversion as the means of excluding the two ladies, received the relatives of the De Villars, in their endeavors to find some lady who might be considered as an heir to this reversion. They said that Mme. de Villars might take this place for a short time only, with the view of transmitting it to her granddaughter, thus facilitating a fortunate marriage alliance for her in the future; but the marshall's wife, steadfast in the determination she had formed not to serve the enmity of any one against the amiable ladies, Flavacourt and La Tournelle, very curtly wrote to the cardinal begging him to no longer depend upon her to further his schemes.

Fleury, dismayed at the increase of the king's devotion to De La Tournelle, and Maurepas fearing still more her resentment, renewed their efforts to exclude the two ladies by conjuring up promises and calling Marquis de Tessé, who wrote to the cardinal recalling to his mind that three years ago he had promised the place to Mme. Dusaulx. Then they compelled the queen to write to the cardinal in favor of Mme. Dusaulx. They did not stop there; they induced the princess to send for Mme. de La Tournelle to inform her that she had forgotten about an engagement in favor of Mme. Dusaulx; and that if the king should accord the choice either to her or to Mme. Dusaulx, the latter would be preferred.

Cardinal and Maurepas were intriguing in this way when Richelieu, who was watching them and who knew the desire of the king, began to influence the conduct of Mme. de La Tournelle; he determined, in opposition to the views of the cardinal and Maurepas, to have Mme. de Mailly dismissed, and to succeed in this undertaking it was necessary to induce this lady, who was naturally amiable, and who already seemed to have forgotten that she had been supplanted by Mme. de Vintimille, to sacrifice her own place as lady-in-waiting, that Mme. de La Tournelle and Mme. de Flavacourt might be received together at court. He held out the inducement of a place with Mme. la Dauphine for her compliance.

It was then that the queen, the cardinal and Maurepas played their last card to thwart this new plan. They each played their own separate game. Fleury told Mme. de Mailly that he would not advise her to speak of this arrangement to the queen; adding that it was not his advice that she should leave; it was his orders. Maurepas went still farther and said to her: "Madame, you do not know your sister, La Tournelle; you must expect to be driven from court by her when you have been deprived of your office by giving it to her." D'Argenson also said to her as formerly the Duc du

Maine said to Mme. de Montespan: "You do not know the king yet; he is becoming weaned from you, a pretended retreat will bring him back to you again."

In the same way they conspired with the queen to prevent her from approving these new changes; but when she saw that in order to secure a place for her sisters, Mme. de Mailly was willing to incur every danger, this virtuous queen could not help but admire the generous action of the good Mme. de Mailly. She deplored her lot but she had not the courage to place obstacles in the way of her fate. It was thus that the cardinal saw his schemes, his intrigues, and his every device becoming useless and in his endeavors to prevent the placing of Mme. de La Tournelle, he again resorted to his former practice which usually had proved successful. He sulkily went to the country, not to Issy, as was his wont, because the king might forget him there, but to a country villa opposite Choisy, in order that the king, from the midst of his orgies, might cast his eyes on his dwelling place and visit him for the purpose of speaking about his return to the ministry. But these ruses, which had so often and so well succeeded, were too well known. The passion of the king was profound; Mme. de Mailly was forgotten; she had no excuse for residence at court for she had yielded her office, and an opportunity was sought to dismiss her because her sister would not yield without this preliminary. Thus Fleury, seeing that Louis, getting beyond his influence, was uselessly yielding to rage and to grief. The king was too anxious to allow his wishes to remain unsatisfied, and Mme. de Mailly had scarcely given up her position that her sister might have it, when to accomplish the sacrifice she was even kind enough to present her to the king and queen and to the royal family, herself. The presentation of Mme. de Flavacourt and Mme. de La Tournelle took place on Friday, the 21st day of September, 1742. Thus after eight months of intrigues of the two factions conducted by Richelieu and d'Argenson on one hand, and by Fleury and Maurepas on the other, to receive or to prevent these ladies from being received, d'Argenson and Richelieu succeeded in their object of breaking the former liaisons of Mme. de La Tournelle and of winning her for the king.

Installed at court, Mme. de La Tournelle, gradually becoming more exacting with the king, continually asked for the execution of her preliminary plans. The king and Mme. de Mailly continued to sup together in the inner apartments, but upon these occasions they were sad and silent and Mme. de Mailly, realizing that she no longer held any power over the king, often indulged in tears. On the 2nd of November, 1742, still occupying a small apartment leading from the inner private apartments of the king, she was suddenly ordered to take another, and to give up her present suite to Mme. de Flavacourt, as if the king had destined this very place to be the scene of his amours. While removing her furniture the king remarked that she could take them wherever she saw fit, adding that he gave them to her, and thinking by this indirect dismissal she might decide to leave the court; but Mme. de Mailly, grief stricken, refused to act upon these hints and so affectionately caressed Louis that the prince yielded and revoked the order for the change of apartments.

These orders, given and revoked, nevertheless, annoyed and exasperated Mme. de Mailly, who still adored the king, and they also had the effect of making the whole court indignant, and loud expressions of sympathy were heard for her. They foresaw and feared, on the other hand, the elevation of Mme. de La Tournelle, who, naturally proud and vindictive, already irritated at not finding the whole court at her knees and jealous of the kindly feelings manifested toward her sister, continued to demand that this sister be dismissed as the prime condition of an agreement made with the king. Embittered against Maurepas, who had driven her from the home of Mme. de Mazarin and who had used every effort to prevent her from being received by Louis, she desired, as a sort of vindication, to be lodged at Versailles in the very apartment of Mme. de Mazarin; so that if she were deprived of her home in the city, she could return to her apartment with the king, a triumph befitting her ambitions. She was continually seeking some means of humiliating Mme. de Maurepas, who was only a minister's wife, not a titled lady; she was planning to have herself declared a duchess, that she might gloat over her, and conceived the plan of marrying her sister, Mlle. de Montcarvel, to some duke in order that the king, seeing the sister of his favorite already titled might not refuse her an advantage which promised to bring her happiness.

CHAPTER LII.

The progress of the passion of Louis XV. for Mme. de La Tournelle. —Stratagem of the favorite to have her sister, Mailly, dismissed.—The plan of Mme. de Flavacourt.—Mme. de Mailly is finally exiled.—Her deep sorrow.—Triumph of Mme. de La Tournelle at Choisy.—She still resists the desires of the king in order that she may accomplish her designs.—Maurepas avenges himself by the production of sarcastic songs.—The last efforts of Cardinal de Fleury.—The feelings of the king concerning the public opinion of his love.

MME. DE MAILLY, who still loved her sister Montcarvel, desired to marry her to Chabot, a gentleman fifty years of age; but Mme. de La Tournelle, who had other plans, and the Duke de Richelieu, a friend of Mme. de Brancas, wished to bring about an alliance between her and the Duke Lauragauis, a widower of Mlle. d'O, by whom he had two boys. This marriage was to facilitate Mme. de La Tournelle's project of becoming a duchess and gave the Duc de Richelieu new support.

Thus three important matters were already agitating the mind of Mme. de La Tournelle; her desire for the humiliation of Mme. de Maurepas, the elevation of her sister Montcarvel to the rank of duchess, as a means of advancing her own ambition, and the exile of Mme. de Mailly. Let us follow the course of Mme. de La Tournelle's ambition.

Mme. de Mailly, who had made all the sacrifices desired of her; who had yielded her place to La Tournelle, and had presented her at court, and who, above all, idolized the king, saw with great sorrow her influence diminishing day by day.

Saturday, the 3rd of November, 1742, she dined in the inner apartments with the king and Meuse as usual; but the king had already spoken to her in these terms: "I promised you, madame, to speak without restraint; I am madly in love with Mme. de La Tournelle; I have not won her yet, but I shall in a short time."

As a matter of fact, Mme. de La Tournelle profited by the folly of the king and by holding him in suspense purposed to dominate him and to come to a thorough understanding with him as to her position. She saw that Mme. de Mailly would soon be dismissed without a house and without a pension, and hopelessly separated from her husband; she feared the same treatment; she asked and with reason, for the assurance of pensions, rents and country estates; but the king, who still feared the cardinal on account of the public disturbance with which this prelate threatened him, if he permitted too publicly his amours and extravagances to become known, was placed in a most difficult position. He was at the same time, jealous of Mme. de La Tournelle, who continually spoke to him of the beautiful d'Agenois to whom she had sworn eternal fidelity. Meanwhile the king grew wan and could not sleep; he disguised himself at night to visit the beautiful La Tournelle in secret that he might persuade her to yield; he went to see her alone, enveloped in one of those great peruques, which the old courtiers wore during the reign of Louis XIV. At other times he would wear a very large ulster, that he might not be recognized in his nightly journeys, and, although it was against his principles to accept conditions from any one, he listened to the ambitious propositions of Mme. de La Tournelle and sought means to gratify them.

One night, Richelieu, following the king, who was going to visit Mme. de La Tournelle, noticed Maurepas in the gallery watching the movements of the prince in order, if possible, to place obstacles in the way of his gratifying his passion for Mme. de La Tournelle. Richelieu detested Maurepas, who chose to scorn him, and spoke everywhere of the rôle that Richelieu was playing in favoring the amours of Louis. Nevertheless this nocturnal meeting came near being the cause of a murder, for Richelieu, recognizing Maurepas, who was thus shadowing the king, drew his sword, took his dark lantern from underneath his mantle, and turned it upon the face of Maurepas. The king said: "Who is there?" Maurepas, terrified, hid his face in his hands, and Richelieu, approaching him with his drawn sword in one hand and his lantern in the other, cried out: "Sire, I shall kill him." Maurepas, who was not courageous, crouched down and implored pardon.

The king kindly bade him arise, and asked what induced him to leave his apartments at such unwonted hours. In the meantime, the favorite, La Tournelle, was well advised, and well guided in her movements by Mme. de Tencin, by d'Argenson, and by Richelieu. The latter concealed his doings so well that at this time he was wont to place a portrait of the favorite in the most conspicuous place in his bed-chamber. This cabal, at the same time, used every effort to annoy Mme. de Mailly, and to force her to leave her apartments in order that Mme. de La Tournelle might occupy them.

Friday evening, Nov. 2, 1742, adding treachery to insult, Mme. de La Tournelle thanked her for the apartment which the king had given her, and said that she had regard for her solicitations. Mme. de Mailly, offended by this jeering, complained to the king, who received her with coldness, and even told her that he was indifferent towards her, giving her distinctly to understand that he no longer loved her. Mme. de Mailly, still idolizing him, threw herself at his feet, wet them with her tears, supplicating him and pleading for pity; but the king, still unmoved, told her to decide on her course quickly, as he had already chosen his.

Mme. de Mailly, completely heartbroken, replied, that having overlooked all the infidelities of the king during his love affair with her sister, Vintimille, she would also shut her eyes to his dealings with La Tournelle. "You must retire this very day," was the king's severe reply.

"But, adorable prince," she cried, with still greater emotion, "I will hide from the eyes of your subjects your new love, which, if known, will diminish the respect they now have for you, and this at any cost should be preserved."

The king, still unmoved, yet, fearing a scene, granted her permission to remain two days longer at court, being determined meanwhile to find some other means of getting rid of her.

The hour of Mme. de Mailly's dismissal at length arrived. D'Argenson advised her to go to Paris for three days, assuring her that the king was displeased with her, and that if she did not yield he might resort to severer measures. Mme. de Flavacourt, who was silently watching the course of events, told her on the other hand that d'Argenson was nothing but a cunning rascal, who was endeavoring to promote his own interests by serving Mme. de La Tournelle. It was the better counsel, however; Mme. de Mailly yielded to d'Argenson's advice, and went to see the king in his room Saturday, November 10, at seven in the evening, to receive his orders. There is no record of what happened in the king's room on this occasion, but she left it completely exhausted and out of breath, and with the mien of a person in utter despair. The king followed her, still fearing a sensational demonstration of her deep sorrow, and while she was still undecided as to what course she should pursue he spoke to her kindly in the presence of some courtiers, who, in the antechamber, were awaiting the outcome of this consultation, and it was in their presence that the king said to Mme. de Mailly, with his customary perfidy on such occasions, (a result of his training under the cardinal): "Monday at Choisy, Mme. la Countess, Monday! I trust you will not keep me waiting."

Thus Mme. de Mailly left the court. A carriage was in readiness for her at the door of the castle, which she entered without having time to inquire whither she was to be driven, and what was to become of her. She had neither father nor mother, and could not present herself at the home of her husband, whom she had left for the king. Mme. le Countess de Toulouse who felt for her in her misfortune, gave her a room, whilst the king sent a squire to bring back the carriage, fearing no doubt that he might lose it, or that she might in some way make use of it.

In the meantime, Cardinal de Fleury, ignorant of these proceedings, for he had taught the king to dissimulate all too well, was making secret efforts to procure young girls who should distract the king's attention from Mme. de La Tournelle, and had already selected a young lady, Mlle. Gaussin, of the Comedie Francaise.

Mme. de Mailly, exiled and overcome by her grief, received no visitors, constantly called aloud for Louis and like an insane person spoke only of returning to him.

The king sent messengers to her and finally Meuse, himself, upon his return to Versailles, described the despair and utter dejection of Mme. de Mailly but could not move the cold heart of Louis.

Thus while the unfortunate mistress was hiding her shame and despair in Paris, her sister, La Tournelle was triumphing at Versailles, where she was visited and sought after by every one, and from whence she was preparing to take that memorable journey to Choisy where her love was to be put to the test. Mme. de La Tournelle, who managed her intrigues shrewdly, desired to have a brilliant ceremony; she wished this journey to be made an occasion for rejoicing; she desired to be accompanied by all the gallant ladies of the court, and the king, who was weak enough to yield to her vanity, invited the most important personages to accompany them.

But when this was mentioned to the Duchess de Luynes, lady-in-waiting and intimate friend of the queen, she, more than all others, felt the impropriety of being present at the installation of a mistress and determined to avoid such an ordeal. Nevertheless, the favorite, who needed a company to give her the support of virtue and an ornament for her triumph, managed the king so shrewdly that she obliged him to speak of it to the Duc de Luynes, her husband, who had for a long time been a candidate for the Cordon-Bleu. However, he was incapable of committing a vile act to hasten his promotion. The king ventured to speak to him alone, and, in a joking way, invited the Duchess de Luynes to join the excursion to Choisy; but the duke, at first accepting, afterwards went to Meuse and begged him to kindly inform Louis that he greatly regretted his inability to accompany them. The king replied with feeling: "Well let him alone." This act of the Duc de Luynes, a man of acknowledged virtue, was worthy the virtuous age of Rome but was out of place in a court so degraded as this and he was punished very severely, for instead of hastening his promotion to the order of the Holy Ghost, it retarded several other promotions; the concubines of of the king were expected to become the channel for favors and for kindnesses, but as they thought of nothing but their own personal power, they could not see, in their extreme blindness, that the fall of monarchical power, or absolutism, begins when offices and employments are prostituted to private ends.

Yet such courtiers and women were not wanting at the court, and there were those who asked nothing better than to be called to the installation of vice in the royal presence.

Mme. de Ruffec consented to go instead of the Duchess de Luynes, and d'Estissac went to request Mlle. de La Roche-sur-Yon, a royal princess, to go to Choisy. She accepted, while Villeroy called on Mme. d'Antin, in behalf of Louis.

The party thus selected, the king with Mme. de La Tournelle at his side, ascended his gondola on the 12th of November, Monday, with Mlle. de La Roche-sur-Yon, Mme. de Flavacourt, Mme. de Chevruese, the Duc de Villeroy and the Prince de Soubise. They were preceded by Marshal de Duras, Du Boullion, De Guerchy, and by the Dukes de Villars, Du Meuse, De Tingri, De Damville, Du Bordage, and d'Estissac. The king gave a dance in the evening and the ladies played at cavagnole. The supper was somewhat quiet and melancholy and Mme. de La Tournelle seemed to be rather ill at ease. After this meal, she approached Mme. de Chevruese and saying that she had been given too large a chamber and that she would not feel at home in it and suggested that they exchange apartments. Mme. de Chevruese, who did not wish to expose herself to such a strange *quid pro quo*, especially, if Mme. de La Tournelle desired to absent herself from her room in order to avoid the king, replied that she was not at home at Choisy and that she could not give up her apartment without an express order from the king. Mme. de La Tournelle barricaded the door and slept alone in her room, which had been the apartment of mademoiselle. It adjoined the " blue-room " so called because the bed, furniture, and tapestry were of moire, blue and white, embroidered by Mme. de Mailly; and although the king came and quietly knocked at her door, Mme. de La Tournelle did not open the door for him that night.

These annoyances, however, instead of disgusting or vexing the king, seemed to increase his passion for Mme. de La Tournelle. When he was not in her presence he wrote her sometimes three times a day. The Duc de Richelieu at that time arrived at the court and brought the king some more intercepted letters, showing them all to Mme. de La Tournelle, for the purpose of convincing her with the necessary circumstantial evidence, of the infidelity of d'Agenois. But the favorite had already determined to yield to the king without entirely breaking with her first lover, and only wished to profit by the extreme eagerness of the king, to establish her power over him on a firm basis, saying to every one while putting off the king, that being loved by d'Agenois (for she claimed this in spite of all these letters which indicated but a fickle affection for her) and passionately loving him herself, she had no desire to betray him, adding, that the king would please her as well, if he devoted his attention to other ladies; and all this while she was planning to yield to the king on very advantageous and satisfactory terms, which fact, in a very guarded way, she mentioned to her intimate friends.

The king, sad, melancholy, embarrassed, and goaded on by his love, approved these reasons of Mme. de La

Tournelle; moreover he did not wish to drive Mme. de Mailly, who was deeply grieving in the capitol, to desperation; he wrote her every day, and Mme. de Flavacourt, who went to see her Tuesday, the 20th of November, brought the news that she had already received her eighteenth letter from the king that very day, which was the fourteenth day of her disgrace. Mme. de Mailly constantly spoke, in these letters, of returning to Versailles. The hope which she cherished, of returning to the king, was the only thing which prevented her from actually dying of a broken heart.

She did not acknowledge that she was utterly abandoned nor that she merited disgrace. She told the king that her husband was about to return from his country seat, that she would be annoyed by him and that her only asylum was that of Versailles, with her good friend. The king, avoiding everything in his replies that might be construed into a consent to her return, told her coolly that he would use his authority to prevent her from being annoyed by her husband.

The queen, on the other hand, moved to compassion for Mme. de Mailly, deeply regretted the suffering of this unfortunate woman and solicited kind treatment for her. She loved her on account of her many virtues and her kindly character; but pretended to sleep when Mme. de La Tournelle came to her apartments to fulfil the duties of her office.

The cardinal, still more displeased than the queen at seeing the king dominated by a shrewd and intriguing woman, joined forces with Maurepas to allay the progress of his love, and Mme. de Maurepas, nettled at seeing a ward, whom she had so deeply outraged, honored by the king's favor and even enjoying triumphs, constantly incited her husband to bring about her disfavor with the king. They had vainly attempted to exclude her from the court, together with her sister, Flavacourt. Their intrigues were futile. Their only means now of showing their disapproval and contempt was in publishing disrespectful and satirical songs. Maurepas composed them, all Paris sang them, and the cardinal sent them to the king as coming from Morville whilst the Director of the Post gave the king the following letter, which he said he had had copied in the office of the censor:—

"The king is no longer loved as he was formerly by the Parisians. The dismissal of Mme. de Mailly and the choice of the third sister as mistress, is universally disapproved. If the king persists in leading this scandalous life he will win for himself the contempt of his people. The third sister is not esteemed more than the second."

The king having read this note returned it to the cardinal and coolly said: "Well, I am indifferent to all this." The cardinal, not surprised, handed him the songs which were amusing the capitol; the king ignored them Fleury, seeing that his unbridled passion was rendering him insensible to the discontent of his people and realizing that his religious principles were being blinded by his libertinism, wished to gradually retire from the affairs of state and from the court, truthfully saying concerning these latter events: "My ministry is complained of;

they prefer the rule of the king: well, we shall see what the condition of affairs will be when the king himself *does* rule." He was a prophet of misfortune, who should have deplored the education he had given Louis and the evil influences which he had exerted over an otherwise admirable character. Meanwhile, however annoying these songs were to the king, he had determined to keep Mme. de Mailly in exile and to promote Mme. de La Tournelle, who enjoyed the verses and songs so much that she publicly sang them at Choisy in the king's presence. They laughed over them together. These poems even hastened the favors of love which she was to grant him. Gradually she became less haughty, until at last she yielded to the urgent desires of Louis; the consummation of this love intrigue took place during the journey on the 24th of November, and threw the cardinal into the depths of despair and eventually caused him to retire altogether from the court.

CHAPTER LIII.

Study of the character of Louis XV. after leaving the tutelage of Cardinal de Fleury at the age of thirty-three years.—His melancholy disposition.—Intimate courtiers awaken him by their orgies at which he drinks too much champagne.—The king affected in turn by religious fears and by the attraction of worldly pleasures.—The sad and secret truths which the cardinal had inculcated in his mind.—Natural timidity of the king toward the general officers and ambassadors. The nature of his mind.—On the death of Fleury, he abandons the state to Tencin, Maurepas, Amelot, Orri and d'Argenson.—His feelings upon receiving the news of the disaster of his army.—Character of the courtiers and of the ladies who were in his company at the time of the death of Fleury.—Plan of Mme. de La Tournelle.—Plan of Mme. de Maurepas as a checkmate; her husband tries to avoid the creation of a duchy out of the estate of Chateauroux, in favor of Mme. de La Tournelle.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY, during the orgies at Choisy, was dying at Issy. He abandoned the state to the mercy of a mistress and the discordant ministers. These persons were governed by a young and indolent king, whose character we must carefully study at this time which marks his real entry into the history of the world as it was at this time that he first assumed his official duties.

The finest characteristic which he possessed, the existence of which was partially due to his preceptor, was the impenetrability of his soul. This quality was so well developed in the prince that people were absolutely ignorant of the opposing desires and ambitions which struggled for mastery in his heart; he was of uneven temperament, sometimes unnaturally gay and at other times even melancholy. When in the latter mood, the ministers, who knew him thoroughly, shrank from approaching him, prefering to wait until his humor was more favorable. After these melancholy spells, the king showed a serene brow, was gentle in his speech, and even when his servants failed in their duty, he laughed at their mistakes and indifference, and uttered no word of complaint.

It was to rouse the king from a state of melancholy, that the courtiers of his intimate circle, during the year of 1732, endeavored to continue the little suppers and make him drink heavily. He sometimes drank too much champagne until Mme. de Mailly, (more tactful than the queen who, upon these occasions, was wont to scold him), corrected this habit by secret entreaties and by bestowing loving favors; this is another proof of the purity of feelings of Mme. de Mailly, who only loved Louis for himself, whilst the other courtiers looked upon him as a useful and lenient sovereign.

Louis, during his periods of deep despondency, was insufferable, but a little wine was enough to make him joyous, amiable and eloquent. At such times he spoke so familiarly with the courtiers at Choisy and at Rambouillet that they sometimes forgot that he was the King of France until he reminded them of their station. He often dined with them without ceremony, and at Choisy, especially, he entertained in his home as if he were a simple noble in his country villa.

The king's education in philosophy and in the higher branches of learning generally had been neglected, as the cardinal had occupied his mind with the details of church rites and the ceremonies of mass, which the philosophy of this century had not as yet attacked with its ridicule. This was his principal subject of conversation with his courtiers. The threats of the gospel against libertines and libertinism formerly made such an impression on his mind that the struggle, between his sense of duty and his tendency to freely indulge his desires, was constant. Death and the devil were his two greatest terrors. He often spoke of illness, of burials and of church ceremonies. During his periodical fits of remorse and terror, he annoyed the ladies of his court by continually dwelling upon these morbid subjects.

A thing which greatly affected the king and which made him very parsimonious was the precautionary prophecy of Cardinal Fleury, who made use of all sorts of ruses to inspire the king with real or imaginary terror; and the cause of this apprehension, which none of his courtiers could ascertain,—this secret, which caused him constant anxiety,—was the prophecy that one day he would be without money and without means of getting it from his subjects, if he permitted his finances to be ruined. Under these circumstances, Louis XV. would have to await, as did Louis XIV., the time when he would be a prey to farmers of the revenue, and from the midst of his grandeur he foresaw that he would be abandoned to their mercy, with this difference, however, that Louis XIV. was respected by his subjects even in the days of his distress, whereas at the present time, the minds of men had become more independent and they would far more readily abandon him, even in his extreme misfortune. The king was annoyed by the fear of such a situation, which, however, never existed. We shall see later that, having abandoned the state to his ministers, he never for a moment was free from the secret terror of being dethroned; and those of his ministers who penetrated this secret continually made use of this feeling to punish parliament whenever it resisted.

Louis loved hunting, the society of women, and thoroughly enjoyed his sojourns at Rambouillet and Choisy, for in the country he divorced all thoughts of business from his mind. On the other hand, he shrank from the performances of his public duties, and was manifestly annoyed at everything they exacted of him. He also preferred to talk to foreign ambassadors about their nation, in private audiences, for timidity and fear lest he might speak awkwardly restrained him from expressing himself publicly. He was manifestly embarrassed in the presence of finely-educated people. He was a man of few but well-chosen words, and was withal a clever storyteller.

Fleury had permitted him to study the history of France, and as he had an excellent memory he recalled, in a remarkable way, dates, names, places and anecdotes. As for genius, he had none, and he was incapable of correlating ideas which enables one to determine new principles, or to advance sound arguments. Deprived of Cardinal de Fleury for six months, and during this time indulging in pleasure continually, it was said of him that he was unmoved by the misfortunes which befell Bavaria toward the middle of the year 1743, for he related the disasters there without apparent feeling, and did not even inquire concerning the details of the events which were transpiring there. Broglie abandoned his posts; the enemy was occupying the banks of the Inn and Iser; they had built a bridge across the Danube river; thirteen battalions belonging to the emperor in Braunau were abandoned without hope of relief; the emperor himself was compelled to leave Munich and flee to Augbourg, yet the king seemed to be entirely indifferent to all these misfortunes. The enemies of Broglie at the court rebelled against the imperiousness of the duke. His friends openly announced that he had disapproved of the management of the present war, the transportation of our troops, and that he had foretold the misfortunes which displeased the emperor who maintained that he was discouraging our troops, but the king alone, as if a stranger to France, was utterly indifferent. Mme. de La Tournelle absorbed his attention, and the Cardinal de Tencin, Orri, Omelot, Maurepas and d'Argenson secretly conducted the war and governed the state.

King Louis XIV., when his ministers, without counseling him, decided some affairs relative to the army, showed displeasure and forbade their giving any orders except in his presence or with his consent, but Louis XV., who had intrusted all general affairs to the care of the cardinal, was incapable of assuming them himself; his indifference was so evident that the whole court was aware of and repeated the fact that on the 30th of June, 1743, the king at dinner did not know to whom he had given the Abbey of Saint-Quentin. This caused much talk among the courtiers. "I am well aware," said the king, "that it was awarded this morning, and I know that it is large and of great importance; but I have not the slightest idea to whom I gave it."

These words were at once written down by a courtier, who, in his diary, deplored with just cause the condition of affairs in France, and the inevitable results of such indolence.

The retreat of Mme. de Mailly, who was somewhat gloomy herself, the death of Fleury, the installation of the two new sisters, who were very gay, brought about in the secret court of the king some changes which were favorable to his melancholy disposition. The Duc d'Ayen and the Count de Noailles were more at their ease since the death of the cardinal, and occasionally dined with him in his inner apartments. These clandestine meals were of such a nature that sometimes Mme. de Flavacourt, who was on very good terms with La Tournelle and Lauraguais, refused to attend. Meuse was there often, for he had not lost his old-time influence under Mme. de La Tournelle, and Luxembourg—who owed his influence to the favor of Mme. de Mailly—Villeroy, Coigny, and even Mme. du Boufflers were sometimes present at these small dinner parties. The Duc de Richelieu had also been called to these nocturnal festivals, but he had not obtained great prestige and influence over the king until the elevation of Mme. de La Tournelle. Belle-Isle, on the other hand, lost in influence and favor after the fall of Mme. de Mailly.

In this circle of intimate courtiers, Guerchy, the Duc de Fitz Hames, the Marquis de Gontaud, Duke d'Aumont, Mme. d'Antin, Soubise, Rubempré, Grille, Duménil, d'Egmont and Boufflers, were sometimes present, though less frequently than the others. All of this selected company, enjoying the favor of the favorite, were anxious to induce the king to spend his money more freely, but the prince refused, and everything was still so mean and parsimonious in this secret court in 1743, that the king often had his dinner brought to the apartments of Mme. de La Tournelle. This lady herself was even wont to order dinner of an eating-house keeper when the king did not dine with her, and on these occasions she often said that she felt proud when receiving the king to dinner, but that she would feel still more so if she were in a position to receive him in her own home. The Duc de Richelieu urged her to ask for a house, and frequently made the remark publicly, that in his opinion all those who entered the antechamber of Mme. de La Tournelle should receive greater consideration than those who had enjoyed intimacy with Mme. de Mailly.

Such were the gentlemen of the intimate circle of the king's court after the installation of Mme. de La Tournelle.

Ambitious women flocked there from all sides; the servility of Mme. la Princess de Conti, of Mlle. de Charolais, of Mlle. de La Roche-sur-Yon, all royal princesses, who were present at the drawing-rooms of the new mistress, was condoned.

Titled ladies and women of rank from all about came to pay their respects. Panderers of every description increased in her company and sought to prove some distant relationship or some youthful liaison with her. The Duchess de Chevreuse, who afforded an example of feminine reserve in her own home, excused herself by saying that her feelings were but the continuation of a friendship of long standing which began in the convent. Mme. d'Antin and Mme. de Belle-Fonds joined this faction, reinforcing it and becoming its great supporters. They were invited to the private suppers at Choisy, at Marly, at the Muette and to all hunting parties where the king wished to combine this exercise with the secret pleasures unknown to the general public and to the rest of the courtiers.

Mme. de Maurepas, alone, of all the court was steadfastly opposed to this party. Full of scorn at the elevation of Mme. de La Tournelle, who was still ambitious to become a duchess, she united her efforts with those of her husband in endeavoring to prevent her from receiving this favor. Strong in the knowledge that her husband was liked and well received by the king, and always remembering that Mme. de La Tournelle had formerly sought her protection, she could not for a moment entertain the idea of adopting any code of etiquette which permitted untitled ladies to associate with titled ladies, especially in the presence of Mme. de La Tournelle, and she profited by the influence she held over her husband, who dared not place obstacles in the way of her plans and schemes, to prevent, if possible, the creation of Chateauroux into a duchy, in favor of Mme. de La Tournelle.

In order to accomplish this object, which the king and the favorite desired so much to see carried out, revenues suitable to their dignity had to be created according to custom. And documents or letters patent, favoring the establishment of this duchy had to be registered in parliament. Maurepas, seeking to postpone the consummation of this affair to please his wife, never ceased to find pretext and all sorts of obstacles to oppose this scheme of the favorite. The private court of the king and the intimate friends of Mme. de La Tournelle were enraged at his conduct and could not conceive how Mme. de Maurepas, who was not of their company, could have the boldness to oppose the will of Louis. They agreed to give Mme. de Maurepas a pleasant nick-name, calling her *la dame de Pique*, and this name, spoken by the ladies who attended the private suppers of the king, was very suitable to a minister's wife who never yielded in her opposition to the wishes of the king's pandering friends. In order to justify this sobriquet they attacked her character and criticised her personal appearance; they said that there was something repulsive in her appearance, which revealed the nature of her character. Mme. de La Tournelle, who was the leader of this faction, possessed an indomitable will and one which overcame all obstacles. We shall see how she brought about the accomplishment of her desires in regard to the Country seat of Chateauroux.

CHAPTER LIV.

Recapitulation of the love affairs of the king.—Beginning of the favoritism shown Mlle. de Montcarvel, sister of Mme. de La Tournelle.—The Duke de Richelieu, Mme. de Brancas and Mme. de La Tournelle bring about her marriage with the Duke de Lauraguais.—Conditions of the marriage.—Character of the Duke and of the Duchess de Lauraguais.—Further efforts of Maurepas to avoid the creation of the Duchy of Chateauroux.—Triumph of Mme. la Duchess de Chateauroux.—Her portrait.—Lines by Maurepas.—Richelieu rewarded by Mme. de Chateauroux.

SUCH was the life of the inner court of Choisy. The king, who very frequently refused admittance to the husbands who were invited to Choisy and who every morning took what was called *sa ronde*, engaged in conversation with each individual lady, thus concealing his favorite from the other ladies and his gallantries from their husbands. Formerly he had loved Mme. de La V——, Mme. de N——, three of her daughters, Mme. de Mailly, Mme. de Vintimille and Mme. de La Tournelle. At length one morning he yielded to a very ardent passion for Mlle. de Montcarvel, who was neither pretty nor of an attractive figure, but was, on the contrary, short, fat and rather coarse. However, she seemed to attract Louis who at the age of thirty-three no longer admired the style of women with whom he had hitherto associated nor enjoyed the amusements in which he had hitherto indulged.

Mme. de Montcarvel was twenty-four years old and boasted that she had preserved a certain jewel with care at the home of Mme. de Lesdiguières, née Duras who had educated her and brought her up in her own home. The king, who admired the gem, was very eager to appropriate it and to give Mlle. de Montcarvel, sister of Mme. de La Tournelle, a titled husband in return. He had two objects in view in this: first, to conceal his pleasures from the public by a marriage; second, to please Mme. de La Tournelle, for by the marriage of her sister to a titled gentleman, the court and the public would be prepared to receive gracefully her promotion as Duchess of Chateauroux. She wished no longer to remain outranked by her sister Montcarvel and it was the Duke de Richelieu again whom the king charged with this new intrigue. An acknowledged friend of the young and pretty women of the court and intimately associated at that time with Mme. de Brancas, he prepared the way for this marriage, formerly disapproved by Fleury, who at the gate of the tomb still boldly warned the king against the danger of ruining his finances to satisfy a mistress. But the Duke de Richelieu insisted and obtained the following promises from Louis which we transcribe here from the original, written by the king's own hand and which was left in the possession of the negotiating courtier:—

"I will allow twenty-four or thirty thousand francs at the most for marriage expenses; eighty thousand francs in rents from the post, one half of which will be divided in common:

"The pension of a lady-in-waiting from the present time:

"Thirty years of preferential credit over the Jews up to the year 1801.

"But I should like to know whether according to the marriage contract, the wife, or the children will enjoy this gift of the Jews or if it is to be shared with the children of the first marriage; and to whom it is intended that this gift shall revert in the case of the death of the future husband without children.

"What gifts can the dowager assure in perpetuity for the children since she is excluded from the duchy."

It can be seen by this private document that the Jews, by virtue of a royal peculation, paid the expenses of the monarchical pleasures. This was the king's first act of generosity in favor of his mistresses.

Mme. de Mailly, who alone of all his numerous mistresses, was very economical, still owed one hundred and sixty thousand francs besides the sixty thousand francs that the Duc du Luxembourg had lent her and the four hundred that she had agreed to pay for her husband, who, as a matter of fact, pretended to be very discontented and could not be restrained in his course against his wife and the king, but by this method of bribing. Thus was the king swayed by his all-absorbing passion. He bestowed a great fortune upon Mme. de La Tournelle, and upon Mme. de Lauraguais. As for the silk of the blue bed that Mme. de Mailly had embroidered and which she afterwards gave to the king as a pledge of their fidelity, it was still unpaid for in 1744, a merchant of the Rue Saint-Denis being creditor.

Disgraced at court, exiled from the royal mansions, and dwelling in an obscure house in Rue Saint-Thomas of the Louvre, Mme. de Mailly, one day, questioned by an interested friend as to why she did not ask the king for a different apartment, replied: "I will dwell in a prison if the king desires that sacrifice, too." She received from the king after a long delay, a pension of thirty thousand francs; but this was at the instigation of Mme. de La Tournelle, who could not abandon her without dishonor to herself. One day Mme. de Mailly ventured to ask the king for a mirror for the mantelpiece of her dark and obscure apartment; the gift was refused and the author of these Memoirs was told by a relative of this lady (who was still living in 1792) that the king replied to her in these terms: "It seems, madame, that the more you have, the greater become your demands. Happily for the memory of Louis the Prince de Tingri burned the letters which passed between the prince and Mme. de Mailly; his cruelty was too apparent in these communications and it was felt that it would injure his memory.

Mme. de La Tournelle, Mme. de Brancas, and the Duc de Richelieu, all interested in the marriage of Mlle. de Montcarvel, hastened its consummation, and were about the only persons to derive any benefit from it; for only nine thousand francs of revenue from the Jews of Metz, were accorded the future husband, and six to his brother Dolse.

The Duc de Lauraguais, ignorant of all these intrigues, and removed from this hot bed of corruption, himself saw nothing but the brightest side of his future establishment. The facility of making a career for himself in the profession of war when obstacles were removed, and the prospect of the promotion and advancement of his two children, whom he had by the late Mme. de Lauraguais (Mlle. d'O.) his first wife, were the advantages which were held out to him. Being entirely ignorant of the details of the secret intrigues of Choisy, for he was following our army in Germany at the time, he consented to the wishes of his mother. His ancestors belonged to the famous Brancas family so renowned at Naples prior to the conquest of the Normans; the family, so distinguished by the favors bestowed upon them by the first kings of Anjou, exhibited all the pride which such an ancient origin justified in France.

Of noble birth and possessing marked personal attractions as well as a strong character, and very ambitious to make a name for himself, Lauraguais consented to the marriage and everything had been concluded when he arrived from the army. He advised Mme. de Mailly not to take part in the ceremony, and she was not present, for her sister, La Tournelle, was to do the honors of the occasion, and the marriage was solemnized on the 20th of January, 1743.

Mme. de Lauraguais was naturally bright, gay, and always ready with witty sayings. She inherited much of this from Mme. de Nesle, her mother. The king, who was wont to tease her, one day described her in four words, in the presence of Mme. de La Tournelle: "I just returned from Paris," he said very seriously, "and I saw the street of Mme. de Lauraguais. It was the *rue des Mauvaises-Paroles*." This expression could not have been better applied. Mme. de Lauraguais, seated in an arm-chair with her sister La Tournelle, was entertaining them by her witty remarks concerning the ladies and gentlemen of Choisy at the time. Maurepas and his wife, aware of the progress of the two sisters in the conquest of the heart and mind of the king, became very uneasy, and played many clever tricks on them. Bitterly angered against them, they devoted their time to placing obstacles in the way of the promotion of Mme. de La Tournelle to the rank of duchess, and although the king was cherishing, in Maurepas, a minister, who was making the work very easy for him, and whom he liked on account of his happy repartee and his wit, yet he wished to be obeyed, for he was incited by a self-love which the Duc de Richelieu had known how to awaken and to revivify in opposition to the jealousy of his minister. The patents of the duchess were therefore hurried along, and after all the customary formalities, the king, to whom they were directly sent when enrolled, succeeded in exacting gracious favors from Mme. de La Tournelle when he delivered them to her. A magnificent casket contained these letters and contained a most amorous communication, with the assurance of twenty-four thousand francs revenue. Such were the results of the intrigues of the Duc de Richelieu. The king did more; he determined that the virtue and personal merit of Mme. de La Tournelle be specified in the patents as the only motive of this favor; but inexorable history reveals the lies of kings, and the house of Mailly, which, more than any other, owed its glory to its illustrious history, and which caused a brilliant genealogy to be engraved and printed, has disavowed this shameful favor, and the feminine virtue of Mme. de La Tournelle was not even cited in this document.

Having become Duchess de Chateauroux and being privileged to take precedence over Mme. de Maurepas, either overwhelmed with honor or surfeited with all the trifling baubles with which kings know how to amuse the lords and ladies of their court, the favorite, guided by Richelieu, became more and more devoted to d'Argenson and to Orri, who on their side depended upon her favoritism. The first present that the comptroller-general procured for her was a necklace valued at thirty thousand francs. Mme. de La Tournelle was, nevertheless, reserved, and made no demands either on the king or on his ministers, waiting for their initiative in giving her money and presents which she received at that time with pleasure but as if due from the king.

She loved magnificence and sought to procure, as did her sister Mailly, striking and beautiful gowns calculated to enhance her beauty and her magnificent complexion, which resembled a rose leaf. She was very graceful, and playful in character, and while gentle in appearance, she was shrewd withal. She had the smile of an amiable child and the majesty of a sovereign queen, and was very unlike Mme. de Mailly, too often gloomy and despondent. She made a great deal of those who were really attached to her; but rebuked on every occasion those who sought to gain her favor by caluminating her sister, De Mailly; she told such persons that if she herself were in the same position they would treat her likewise. Her position made her the subject of many satirical poems as was the custom of the times. It was told in them how M. le Duc had married La Tournelle and paid her dowry. All sorts of calumnies were spread broadcast; but she was neither surprised nor affected by them, maintaining herself at court by an evenness of temper, by the dignity of her bearing, and holding the king in such dependence on her that she could dismiss him unceremoniously and without reply when he came to visit her in the evening. Sometimes she chose, if the rendezvous had not been agreed upon, not to hear his knocking; the king retired and the next day she would write to the Duc de Richelieu: "I heard him knocking at my door yesterday, but he retired when he realized that I was in my bed; it is well that he should accustom himself to this."

Conquered by the king's favor, yet, at the same time, cherishing some slight regard for him, and still deeply in love with the beautiful d'Agenois, it is well known that she swooned as if struck by a thunder-bolt when learning of his wound in 1744, received during the attack on Chateau Dauphin. Her one desire was to ruin Maurepas, to exile his wife, who was obliged to be present at her presentation to the king, to the queen, and to the royal family as the Duchess de Chateauroux. This presentation took place with great pomp in accordance with the wishes of her sister, Duchess de Lauraguais, in the presence of eight ladies, five of whom were titled and seated as she was; namely, Mme. de Lauraguais, the wife of the Marshal Duras, the Duchesses d'Aiguillon and d'Agenois; and three standing, namely Mme. de Flavacourt, Mme. de Rubenpré, and Mme. de Maurepas.

Some weeks prior to the final decision in the affair of the duchy, the king gave Mme. de La Tournelle a lodge, and permitted her to choose his best cook, giving her also six beautiful horses. Her house was furnished in the most sumptuous and luxurious manner. Maurepas was in despair, and, as usual, resorted to satirical verses for revenge.

The Duc de Richelieu, who was the real mover in these intrigues, was soon rewarded for his attachment to the Duchess de Chateauroux and the Duchess de Lauraguais, whom he had guided and installed. The little Duc de Rochechouart, four years of age, having died the 18th of December, 1743, the place of first gentleman chamberlain was left vacant, which caused intrigues similar to those which preceded the choice of the Duc de Fleury during the cardinal's reign. Saint-Aignan and Marshal Duras solicited the place. A few spoke in favor of the Duc de Châtillon; the friends of Luxembourg said that he had been promised the position, but the far-seeing courtiers marked the Duc de Richelieu as the prospective recipient. Richelieu was at that time in Languedoc overseeing his estates, and Maurepas, who foresaw with deep regret that the Duc de Richelieu would have the place, desiring to speak with the king during the routine of his work, was silenced by that prince. Maurepas said: "What shall I say, sire, in reply to the petitions which are importunately handed me asking for this office?" "Simply reply that you do not know to whom I shall give it." That was to say, that it was already promised. The king, as a matter of fact, had already accorded it to Mme. the Duchess Chateauroux, and had himself wished to acquaint the duke with the news by a special courier who was to leave at once and carry the news to the duke before he could receive it from any other source; it was for this purpose that he concealed the news from Maurepas.

We see from all this, how intrigues and enmity are the inevitable results of the infidelity of kings. Let us consider the conduct of the queen and of the dauphin, who were eye witnesses of these scandals; let us especially study the character of these lovers and of the husbands of the king's favorites, and let us consult the opinions of the French people, observers of this depraved life.

CHAPTER LV.

Character of Queen Maria after the first infidelities of King Louis XV. in 1732 up to 1744. Conduct of this princess towards the mistresses of the king.—Conduct of the king toward her.—D'Agenois comes to court to witness the change of his former mistress to the Duchess de Chateauroux.—Character of Lauraguais, of Vintimille, of Mailly, of De La Tournelle, and of the husbands of the favorites of the king.

THE late queen was naturally given to much weeping; but tears, so often the result of weakness, were the only outlet of her grief, and after the first infidelities of the king in 1732, she indulged but once or twice in petty acts of malice, and for that very reason they were recorded and rehearsed a long time afterwards. Having retired to her apartments to read or to play, she was wont to prostrate herself for hours at a time before her crucifix and seek consolation in prayer. She regarded the life which the king was leading as a source of future calamity to France, which fear she had already confided to her most intimate friends. She believed that heaven, in abandoning her husband, would also abandon her whole kingdom; thus her whole life was passed in weeping, groaning and in tears.

The first infidelities of the king threw her into a violent fit of weeping; but gradually she accustomed herself to her abandonment, experiencing, however, great bitterness when she reflected that she had brought it upon herself on account of her repeated refusals to satisfy the king's wishes. She was forced to content herself by praying for his conversion. She was extremely annoyed in 1732 at seeing a princess of the royal blood, the Princess de Conti, a leader in the intrigues between Mme. de Mailly and the king, and that she was found participating in the pleasures and amusements of the young, showed that she was a woman of intriguing character. In the deepest despair at seeing Louis estranged from her, she one day won great admiration for herself by remarking, " An old coachman still likes to hear his whip crack." This witty saying was repeated for a long time afterward at court.

Another time Mme. de Mailly, when one of her ladies who had recently been declared mistress of the king, addressed her more respectfully than usual, as if she were still ignorant of her gallantry, replied: " What! do you forget that you are the mistress?" These are the only open complaints which she was heard to utter.

The queen also endured without complaining the laxness and indifferent performance of their duties by the ladies-in-waiting, who were mistresses of the king. Very frequently Mme. de Mailly sent in her own place Mme. de Gontaut or some other follower, regardless of her turn, to take charge of the queen's retirement whilst Mme. de Mailly, herself, was present with the king. At other times the queen herself sent her ladies, who were invited there, to the private suppers of the king, and weary of the many requests on account of the frequent repetition of these nocturnal orgies, she finally gave them all a general permission. In this sad position her only care was to please God, enjoying the intimate friendship of Ladies de Fleury, d'Ancenis, De Rupelmonde, and especially of that incomparable woman, Mme. de Luynes, the faithful friend with whom she usually supped. These ladies lived very pious and unostentatious lives, and little merited the derision of the secret and licentious court of the king, which called them *la semaine sainte* because of their virtue. Louis maintained great reserve toward the queen, and seemed to be annoyed when he reflected that his own private life contrasted conspicuously with the religious life lead by his wife. He seldom approached the table at which she was playing cavagnole, choosing to maintain the utmost reserve toward her.

Compelled to bow to this severity of her husband and master, she often remained standing in company without receiving the customary, "*Àsseyez-vous, madame,*" from the king. Moreover, he invariably refused to grant the favors she requested until she at length sought Mme. de Mailly; afterwards fearing Mme. de La Tournelle, she attempted one day to assert her rights and asked a very moderate favor for Nangis. The cardinal, who had refused her other favors for the same gentleman, would not make the least concession. This time she felt herself so imposed upon that she made another effort and pleaded her cause to Louis, telling him of the sad position of the Queen of France, who could not obtain the slightest recognition. "Do as I do," said the king, again; "ask nothing of him."

The dauphin was not so patient and humble. Brought up in the most austere piety by his mother and by Boyer, he could not bear to calmly hear references made to the mistresses of his father. In 1742 even he understood the meaning of the word favorite, and knew that they were prejudicial to his mother. Being too young, during the supremacy of Mme. de Mailly, and seeing nothing but kindly attentions for her on the part of his mother, he had not as yet made any humiliating observation, but having grown older during the amours of Mme. de Chateauroux, and having seem the queen pretend to sleep when this lady appeared to fulfil the duties of her office as lady-in-waiting, the young prince had not the prudence nor precaution to conceal or restrain his feelings toward the mistress. In 1743 this favorite entering a ball-room where the young dauphin was, the young prince stared at her and made a very impolite grimace. This was seen by several courtiers and by the queen, who asked him with great feeling what ailed him. The dauphin, who saw that his peculiar action was noticed by several other persons, beside Mme. de Chateauroux, refused to answer his mother, who at once spoke to madame and begged her assure to her brother most emphatically that she was displeased at such improper and impolite conduct toward Mme. de Chateauroux. Thus the queen bore herself during the infidelities of her husband.

Mme. de Chateauroux's lover, the ingenius, beautiful, and ambitious d'Agenois, developed a very different disposition. Truly in love with Mme. de Chateauroux, and inheriting a character resembling that of his cousin Richelieu, who loved women, not only for themselves but as a means to further his intrigues, he returned to court in 1744, to behold his lady now a duchess and a favorite of the king. Adroit and discreet, and with the ambitions of a courtier who desires to rise, always devoted to Mme. de Chateauroux, he concealed the game which he was contemplating by pretending to have a tender passion for Mme. de Flavacourt. He did this for two reasons:—

First, to make the king jealous and to obtain favors, if they were to exile him from the court and from the capital, and incidentally to serve his ambitions, and promotion in the service. He said that if he devoted himself to Mme. de Flavacourt, the king would soon be annoyed by a secret jealousy and would be alarmed lest there might be new liaisons with Mme. de Chateauroux.

His second object was to inspire Mme. de Chateauroux with jealousy; he did not know that she was still in love with him, and thought that by so doing he might re-establish himself in her affection. He wished to inspire the jealousy of the king, causing him to fear lest he might become the devoted lover of his mistress again, and the jealousy of this lady, who was still in love with him, and distressed to see him devoted to her sister, Flavacourt. Hence d'Agenois, in the presence of the king, his rival, and of the favorite who had been unfaithful to him, made himself as fascinating as possible. Understanding the embarrassment of women who love sincerely and who are restrained by fear, he at length inspired, by his irresistible personalty, both the jealousy of the king and the love and jealousy of Mme. de Chateauroux.

Mme. de Flavacourt, who was naturally amiable and susceptible, apparently submitted to these attentions without appreciating the cause of her sister's jealousy or the resentment of the king, who showed less attention to her than formerly. She was commonly called La Poule, which name the king had given her on account of her attitude towards the indiscreet people of her time and the amiable idlers, who were susceptible to her attentions. Some thought this name was applied to her on account of her noble bearing, her manners, or perhaps on account of the way in which she dressed her hair; others, for the author of these Memoirs has questioned the gentlemen who were thoroughly acquainted with the customs of those times, attributed this pseudonym to her maternity and especially to her motherly instincts.

As to the husbands, the fathers and the brothers of these favorites, they were almost without exception men of mediocre character. The Duc de Lauraguais, however, on returning from the Spanish frontier, decorated with the Golden Fleece and having been created lieutenant-general, upon observing the conduct of his wife, no longer cared to visit the depraved court, where she dwelt. He continued to serve the king but never saw his wife again. Moreover, the silence of Louis Alexandre de Mailly, Count de Rubempré, who died in 1747, and who married the first of the sisters whom the king loved, and with whom the Count de Mailly quarreled, had been purchased. The Count de Vintimille, being made commander of the Camp of the Regiment bearing his name, remained away from the court. The Marquis de Flavacourt, a man of military instincts, never left the army. He was the only one of all these husbands who lived pleasantly and happily with his wife by whom in 1739 he had a son, August-Frédéric, and in 1742, a daughter, Adélaïde, who, in 1755, married the Marquis d'Estampes, while La Tournelle, a worthy man for whom Mme. de Mailly procured a regiment, disconcerted by the first gallantries between his wife and d'Agenois, retired to his country seat of Bourgogne, where he engaged in philanthropic and agricultural pursuits and where he died prior to his wife's yielding to the power of the king.

The Marshal de Vauban, a friend of the family, while visiting his grandfather sometime before, asked him why, when he had such an immense quantity of wood on his place, he had no revenues; whereupon Vauban suggested the building of a canal, as far as the river, where he might float his wood to market by rafting it. Thereupon La Tournelle bought all the wood that he could in the neighborhood; dug the canal, and increased the revenue from his land, which was only a thousand francs, to fifty-two thousand francs.

A vacancy was made in the regiment of Condé by the death of La Tournelle, and it was thought that it would be filled by Coëtlogan, first squire of the Count de Clermont whose wife was maid-of-honor to Mme. la Duchess. Coëtlogan had been sub-deacon; he was no longer in service and his former office caused his wife to be pleasantly rallied at court. He did not secure this regiment however. Mme. de Flavacourt also asked for the regiment for Sabran, whom she wished to marry to her sister Montcarvel; but her sister Mailly went to Breteuil to ask for his exclusion and to inform the cardinal that she had asked it of the king. The evening before, Mme. de Sabran, having been accused of using disrespectful language to the favorite, came to apologize and Mme. de Mailly, who was neither credulous nor vindictive, wrote in favor of Sabran; this helped to bring about the marriage, as well as the concession of the regiment.

Having described the queen and the dauphin, the husbands and the lovers of the favorites, shall we not, for a moment, turn our attention to the French, as a people?

Witnessing the scandalous life of the king and accustomed to seeing the numerous mistresses of the sovereigns nothing but a source of misfortune, detesting in general all favorites, the people loudly condemned the beginning of the king's libertinism. The people of Paris more than once manifested the indignation which they felt. At the theatre one day, Mme. de La Tournelle dared to take a seat with her sister Lauraguais in a box with the king and the princesses. This act, at once, silenced the applauding and gave rise to loud murmurs. The king should have observed from this that in order to please his people he must lead a more decent life; but men of his character do not profit by observation, and instead of subjecting their conduct to law and to the will of the people they are at once incensed by them and seek means of subjecting them to the will of their court.

CHAPTER LVI.

War with Germany in 1741 and 1742.—Invasion of the French, Prussians, Bavarians, and Saxons, into the possessions of Maria-Theresa.—Conquest of Bohemia.—The taking of Prague in the presence of the arch duke.—Stratagems of the Count of Saxony.—Character of the Pandeurs and of the Hussars.—Fury of Maria-Theresa.—Her army retakes upper Austria and takes possession of Bavaria.—She negotiates with the King of Prussia; defection of that prince.

THE King of Prussia, before the manifestoes and declarations which usually precede a war, had inundated Silesia with his troops; he admitted it afterwards, when he was assured of his prey. The other belligerent powers had recourse to another method; they covered all Europe with manifestoes, calling heaven as a witness of the justice of their claims on the inheritance of Maria-Theresa; then, they took up arms. Fleury wished to appear still more circumspect; he began war only under the title of ally. The Elector of Bavaria was appointed commander-in-chief of our troops reunited to his. Leuville, Ségur and Daubigné, Polastron, and the Counts of Saxony and of Bavaria, lieutenant-generals, were to command in his absence, but under the orders of the Marshal of Belle-Isle, who was pressing at Frankfort the election of the emperor; while the Marshal of Maillebois camped at Osnabruck, was in a position to overrun the Electorate of Hanover if the King of England made a move.

That army had the effect of producing a treaty of neutrality between France and England, which lasted as long as we were victorious. As the troops of the electorate were approaching the frontier of Bohemia, the Austrian army left Silesia to assist Bohemia. The Bavarians made an attack on one side, the Saxons, on the other. The grand duke, strong with his Hungarians, Hussars, Pandeurs and Talpaches, hastened to the other side of Moravia. All Austria united in raising for him an army of eighty thousand men, which established itself at Neuhaus, in the south of Bohemia.

The French and Bavarian armies, crossing the Danube and penetrating into Bohemia under the orders of the Marshal of Thoring, took possession without resistance of upper Austria, left Ségur there as lieutenant-general, and proceeded toward Prague, the capital of Bohemia, to besiege it. The court of Vienna, terrified, escaped in haste to Hungary, believing that the city of Vienna was going to be besieged. But such was not the plan.

The Saxon army was led by the Count of Roudouski as commander-in-chief. There were in his cavalry, led by the cavaliers of Saxony, 1,200 Uhlans, a sort of guerrillas, who live only on booty. They were mounted on Cossack horses. They wore short jackets and breeches, and for food were satisfied with a little honey, dry bread and wine-brandy as beverage. Armed with a lance which they handled skillfully, each of them was assisted by one or two valets, carrying a musketoon and two horse-pistols. They were sent before the attack of a squadron. The Uhlans advanced then unexpectedly, galloping and brandishing their noisy lances to frighten the horses of the enemy. Thus they were fit to fight the Austrian hussars who, fearing the fire and the lance, and unable to reach them with their sabres, were always fighting with inferior arms.

The Saxon army camped at Trojan, within two leagues of Prague, and the capital of Bohemia was then besieged on all sides by three armies.

It was this spot which Belle-Isle had selected as the general headquarters of the war against Maria-Theresa as the central point of activity against the Austrian power which was to be divided and subdued. Bohemia, surrounded by Silesia on the northeast, by Saxony on the northwest, and by Bavaria on the southeast, was protected by the Austrians only on the southeast, where the camp of Maria-Theresa was.

The siege of Prague was resolved upon, but it was in the middle of winter, in a country whose climate is severe, and the consequences of a long, regular siege were to be apprehended. So they tried to carry the place by assault by four simultaneous attacks. Two of them were to be feints only. The attempt seemed most foolhardy in the opinion of the wisest officers. They knew that the governor of the city, who was expecting a siege, had been preparing for two months to offer a vigorous resistance. He had provided himself with every munition of war and provision which he might need; he had one hundred and twenty pieces of cannon and we had no bread nor forage. The two armies of Gassion and of the Saxons had only thirty pieces of artillery, and we had to face thirty-six thousand men within three leagues commanded by the archduke. But the boldest resolution prevailed over the more reserved of the military council.

In the city were only twenty-five hundred men, two hundred bourgeois, and as many students capable of offering resistance; those students, formerly, had twice raised the siege of the city, which fact made a great impression on the mind of the troops; however, the necessity of abandoning such a poor position compelled them to act. Here follow the details of the siege.

On the nights of the 24th and 25th of November, 1741, the Count of Saxony crossed the Moldaw on a bridge of boats with a detachment of eight hundred picked men and infantry under the orders of Broglie and Chevert, lieutenant-general of Beauce, with four companies of grenadiers, six hundred dragoons, eight hundred carabineers and six hundred horses of the king's brigade. He advanced with his cavalry and the dragoons as far as the village of Couratilz to meet his infantry which had preceded him, under the command of the Marquis of Mirepoix. The Count of Saxony approached with his cavalry within half range of the cannon and was received with bullets which fell among the French troops without damage. Having seen what he wanted, he withdrew and arrayed his cavalry for battle; but the elector warned him not to undertake anything without his orders. The Count of Saxony intending to place dragoons in the front, ordered the Duke of Chevreuse to protect his flanks, and remained in the village of Couratilz. The elector had his quarters within a league of Prague. In the meanwhile, the grand duke approached the city to defend it. The elector, whose troops were much less numerous, could not hope to offer any resistance, as he was not assisted by the Prussians who remained in the distance as spectators of the events. If he crossed the Moldaw, a battle was inevitable; if he did not cross it, Prague was relieved, which fact would dash our hopes of taking that city, make us lose everything, abandon everything, and oblige the elector to take refuge in Bavaria. Under these circumstances, our artillery was seen approaching, which fact prompted the Count of Saxony to urge the elector to let him carry out his project.

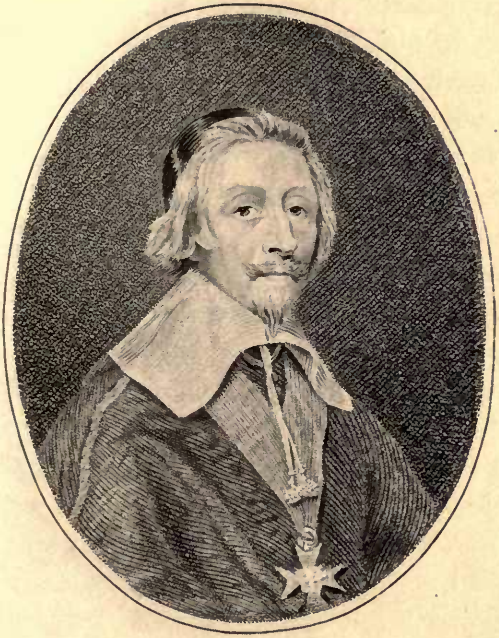
To conceal his plan, the Count of Saxony left Couratilz at ten o'clock at night, made a great circuit, arrived within half a league of Prague at half past five in the morning and went, alone with Chevert, to reconnoitre the place. He noticed that the front to be attacked was covered by a destroyed ravelin and caused the grenadiers and the dragoons to advance slowly in that direction, and to place ladders against the front which they had to attack. The grenadiers and two detachments of dragoons mounted, accompanied by the beating of drums. The brave Chevert climbed first, preceded by a determined grenadier—to whom he said: "Do you see that sentinel over there? He will say to you: 'Who goes there?' Do not answer, but proceed. He will fire at you, but will miss you. Immediately strangle him! I'll be there to protect you."

In the meanwhile, Gassion was directing a false attack; he kept up such a firing that the commander was deceived and divesting the new city of its defenders, he led his forces in the direction of Gassion, and thus practically increased the strength of the besiegers who were already taking possession of the city on the opposite side. The Saxons, having crossed the ditch, climbed over the ramparts with much activity and courage. On the other hand, the French, who were making the real attack, climbed also without resistance, with Chevert at the head of the grenadiers, as we have seen. At two o'clock five hundred carabineers broke in a door with axes and repulsed six hundred students of the university. A handful of Austrians took flight towards the citadel whose doors had been opened to the victors without resistance. The garrison surrendered as prisoners of war, and we were, at six o'clock in the morning, masters of the capital of Bohemia without having lost fifty men.

Biron, Mirepoix, Latour, camp-marshals, displayed great activity in assisting the Count of Saxony. Mortemart, colonel of infantry; Fougères, brigadier of cavalry; Chevreuse, commanding all the dragoons, led the detachment with six pieces of cannon to search for the enemy, who desired to prevent our union with Leuville. But the taking of Prague disconcerted him and threw him into confusion.

That expedition was made near the Austrian army, which merely played the part of a spectator. But in our new position, it could subdue us by famine by interrupting the course of the river. The Count of Saxony, with another detachment, came and drew up his army in

CARDINAL RICHELIEU



battle array within a league of Prague, determined to resist attack. By diverse movements well conceived, he defended the approaches; but the enemy, who knew the location better and who was superior in numbers, forced the French to retire to Prague, while the Princes of the Deux-Ponts and of Beouveau, Poniatowski and Baroski, acting as volunteers, proceeded at the head of the detachment, to harass the enemy against whom they opposed the formidable Uhlans. Those Polish soldiers claimed to be from noble families of Tartary, who established themselves in Poland, and there preserved their custom of bearing arms, and distinguished themselves in that trade by unusual celerity in marching, by their unexpected attacks and by their keen intelligence.

Belle-Isle, master of Prague, levied taxes on everybody. In vain they tried to avoid the payment, the marshal, in order to collect 140,000 pounds which were due, warned them that he would set fire to the property of the unwilling inhabitants. The sum was paid to him, but such action was not the best means of conciliating a conquered people.

That attack proved the fact that everything is due to diligence. If the grand duke, an unavailing spectator, had not wasted his time in hunting in the forests of Bohemia; if, instead of vigorously besieging the city of Prague, we had remained in our camp—perishing of inaction—Prague would not have been captured. But French energy was rewarded; the grand duke lost everything, and we secured a place of safety from which we could escape very easily, having always the means of retreat open. In that position which gave so much advantage to our troops, jealousy divided our generals; Belle-Isle had drawn up the plans of the expedition and Broglie, offended by the reputation and standing of his rival, determined to have our lieutenant-generals beaten at every opportunity.

The Elector of Bavaria summoned all the states-generals of Bohemia to assemble in the city of Prague. Four hundred deputies of the three orders acknowledged him as the King of Bohemia without opposition and without delay. The priests, according to the custom of the country, showed their relics and displayed the old rusty rapier of a former King of Bohemia, Saint Wenceslas.

The grand duke, ashamed of his inaction, and of the defeat, attempted to enter the French camps established at Pisek but was repulsed. The King of Prussia took possession of another border of Moravia without great effort. It was the appanage of the older sons of the kings of Bohemia.

Great was the fury of Maria-Theresa when she was informed of the conquest of Bohemia and the taking of Prague; she gave orders that her Croates and her Pandeurs be let loose against the allies, that no mercy should be shown, and that the greatest efforts should be made against our troops. She recalled the grand duke, advising him to devote his time to producing children since he had shown neither vigilance nor capacity for war. She appointed in his place Prince Charles of Lorraine, who had more resources, and whose activity made great amends for the faults of the grand duke.

The Count of Kevenhuller, an Austrian general, was appointed to the command of troops in upper Austria, always occupied by Ségur, and ordered to proceed towards Bavaria. The elector, in taking possession of Bohemia, had weakened his defences in his electorate which was left unprotected on every side and that electorate the court of Vienna intended to surprise. The archduke had lost the confidence of the troops; Kevenhuller obtained it and deserved it. Ségur defended upper Austria, posted in Lintz, the capital; Kevenhuller despatched colonel Menzel, a famous partisan, who, at the head of a large number of hussars planned unforeseen attacks. He attacked Ségur, who had only eight or ten thousand men to protect the country, who finding themselves surrounded, capitulated shamefully and promised not to take up arms against the queen for a year. The enemy, advancing towards Passaw, recovered that place from the allies with little opposition.

Belle-Isle, not wishing to leave our troops in an unsafe position, was of the opinion that they should all withdraw to Passaw, because upper Austria, unfortified, could always be taken easily; but the Elector of Bavaria wished to remain in Lintz. It was in vain that the Marshal of Terring was despatched from the army of Broglie to assist that place; he was defeated on the way. It was thus that the lack of intelligence of the troops, and the stubbornness of the elector caused the plans of Belle-Isle to fail. The loss of precious time near Vienna also was a second cause of our misfortunes.

Our troops, commanded by Ségur, lieutenant-general, by the princes of Rohan and of Tingri, the marquises of Marcieux, of the Châtlet and of Souvray, Lord Clare, Baufremont, l'Hôpital and Turmeny, met within two leagues of Lintz. The hussars of Menzel let them pass. The equipage arrived an hour later, and the hussars captured it. In vain the leaders offered capitulation which would permit them possession of their baggage; the enemy loaded themselves with booty.

Those hussars, Hungarians by origin, were born poor and miserable. They were adicted to theft; good faith and morality were unknown to them. Their skill consisted in handling a sabre and they exhibited a formidable ferocity.

Ségur complained to Kevenhuller of the violation of the treaty and asked the return of 6,000 florins stolen from his army; the cowardice of the operation was so evident, that Kevenhuller obliged his commissaries to repay that sum.

Menzel, on the other hand, performed acts of inhumanity worthy of his character by sending scouts near Straubingen and having everything put to fire and sword. He published a sort of manifesto in which he threatened to cut off the noses and ears of all the Bavarians who should take up arms. The elector cried out against such ferocity and complained of Menzel to general Brinklan, who answered him: "Woe to the conquered." Maria-Theresa, chagrined at the loss of Bohemia, had commanded the strictest rigor to be enforced against those who should oppose her army.

While Kevenhuller was entering Bavaria through Austria, an incursion of Hungarian peasants added to those of the Tyrol, was devastating the south of Bavaria. Menzel attacked Munich. That capital proposed to surrender without striking a blow and was put under contribution, while the elector was proclaimed emperor at Frankfort under the name of Charles VII. France sent a second army to maintain his election, to protect his electorate and to reinforce Bohemia occupied by the allied troops, with the exception of Egra, a strong and important place which the Count of Saxe had orders to besiege. The latter had under him the Marquis of Mirepoix, the Dukes of Chevreuse and of Boufflers. This city was besieged for six months; but finally the valor of the count prevailed.

Prince Charles was engaged elsewhere against the King of Prussia who defeated him completely at Czarflaw. The king had perfected his tactics and had the best disciplined troops in Europe; he had created a revolution in the military art. A Frenchman, witness of the engagement, estimated that Austria lost two thousand men; that the Prussian soldiers averaged six shots in one minute, and six hundred and fifty thousand shots during the whole engagement; that the method of the Prussians of rapid firing was, however, inferior to that of shooting one-fifth less, but taking more time for correct aiming. He claimed that the Austrians lost the battle through plundering according to their custom, before victory was assured. The King of Prussia had moreover so well perfected the order of his troops that, when a Prussian battalion became isolated it could not be routed, as a moment sufficed to put it in order. It was due to the late King of Prussia that the army had been trained to fight with such admirable unity and vigor.

The army of the queen on the contrary, with its Hungarians and its Talpaches, was more inclined to devastate, plunder, and assassinate by roving bands in a province, than to engage in serious war. Frederick, victorious, remained in the neighborhood of Czarflaw, and the Pandeurs and the Croates continued to pillage and to gain victories everywhere over the French.

The Prince of Lobkowitz, who commanded the Austrian army, had crossed the Moldaw on the 16th of May to invest the castle of Fravemberg in front of which he dug a trench the next day. Broglie, and Belle-Isle in charge of our troops, went to its assistance and gathered in haste all available troops in Bohemia to relieve the castle. They arrived on the 25th of May in the presence of the enemy whom they compelled to engage in a battle which ended only at night and which has since been called the battle of Sahay. The most lively encounter took place between the Austrian cavalry and our carabineers and dragoons, who defeated it. A forest protected the cavalry in its flight, and the French spent the night on the field of battle. The Duke of Chevreuse, who distinguished himself, received four wounds; one on the cheek, another on the heel, a third from a ball which remained between his vest and his shirt, and a cut of a sabre. The Count of Broglie was wounded on his arm, and Valon, the captain of the guards, received a gunshot which pierced his tongue.

That was our last success in Bohemia; because the Marshal of Belle-Isle, who understood our situation in that country, had gone to concert a programme with the kings of Prussia and Poland. The Marshal of Broglie had sent the Count of d'Aubigné to take possession of the post of Thein, on the other side of the Moldaw; he had also sent Boufflers as far as Kruman and left at Fravemberg the main body of his army. Prince Charles united with Lobkowitz, and the two armies proceeded towards Thein, crossed the Moldaw river and caused d'Aubigné who threatened the Marshal of Broglie to withdraw. The latter, obliged to face a superior army, despatched a message to Boufflers to leave the post of Kruman, and withdrew to Pisek, thence to Bercaune and Koniksal whence he crossed the Moldaw and established his camp under Prague. The retreat of Broglie was not well received at the court where opinions were divided. Some favored Belle-Isle, others declared themselves the partisans of Broglie. The queen, Nangis, Mme. de Mazarine, les Châtillon, the ministers, Orri especially, and Maurepas defended Broglie; the king and Madame de Mailly sided with Belle-Isle whom the Noailles, except the Countess of Toulouse, could not tolerate.

Belle-Isle was well aware of the energy of the partisans who rose against him; he had been present at a meeting of all the ministers, at the cardinal's, where they had remained four hours. On the 8th of March, 1742, he had given an account of his negotiations and of all that had taken place in Germany concerning politics and military matters, asserting also that offensive language had been spoken against him, and carried to such an extent that upon his arrival in Paris, having been delayed by an accident, inquiries had been made at his house as to what day he had been sent to the Bastille. His representation and his complaints were so strong and so animated, and Mme. de Mailly sustained them in such an energetic way, that the whole assembly let him speak and apparently acknowledged that it was without reason that the cardinal refused him his approbation. The king took such a feeble part in these quarrels that he often went out during the most interesting debates on our situation in Germany, tired of the investigations. During our unsuccessful operations in Germany we were informed that the King of Prussia was siding with the victorious party. He had succeeded in making a second treaty with the Queen of Hungary and assumed as a pretext for leaving us that the king had refused him the command of our troops. Moreover, he knew, he said, that Fleury was already treating secretly with the Queen of Hungary, that he had the proof of it. The French people must have been aware for some time that the little princes in Europe, especially when very ambitious, always adhered to the strongest faction. As long as France and Bavaria were victorious the treaty of Frederick with Bavaria was respected; the elector granted Silesia to the King of Prussia, who in return granted him Bohemia and the conquest of Germany. But when fortune smiled on Maria-Theresa, then Prussia at once negotiated peace with her.

The English took occasion, shortly after, to insult us;

they entered the port of Saint-Tropez, in Provence, to burn five Spanish wagons loaded with cannon, an act which is considered the greatest affront between maritime powers. The king seemed prostrated by it. All the caresses of Madame de Mailly in the small apartments could not console him. To prevent further attacks of this kind he had Dunkirk fortified. The arms of the Queen of Hungary were victorious; Ségur had been expelled from upper Austria; the queen occupied Bavaria and had just negotiated a private peace with Frederick, in order to expel more easily the French from Bohemia. In vain the Marshal of Belle-Isle went to beseech the King of Prussia not to break away from the alliance; that prince answered that the queen had granted him all that he requested, and that he had no longer any pretext of engaging in war with her.

CHAPTER LVII.

The French army besieged in Prague.—Horrors of the Siege.—Rigor of the climate.—Famine.—Extremities of the French army.—Vigorous sallies of Biron.—Incapacity of the Ministry at Versailles.—Retreat from Prague.—Capitulation of Chevert.

IN spite of our misfortunes and losses in Bavaria and Austria, the French army, having joined the allies, still occupied the city of Prague, and the queen, who could not expel it except by siege, feared that one of her principal cities would be lost forever. The French generals declared that they were ready to surrender it with the condition that they should be allowed to withdraw with arms and baggage. But the queen who had twenty-two thousand men thus shut up in her capital, wanted to make them prisoners of war. Forty thousand Austrians and twenty-six thousand Pandeurs or Croates, who were watching the neighborhood of Prague, kept them at bay and refused an honorable retreat. Butcher's meat cost thirty sous a pound, a slice of chicken one ecu. The soldiers, after having suffered for a long time, had to live on bread and water, and were obliged to watch their position day and night against the incursions of an enemy who was plentifully supplied with everything. In a short time the sick and wounded were ordered beef-broth partly made of horse-flesh. When Fleury attempted to move the queen, she was inflexible. The French, who were maintaining the siege with courage and fighting desperately, ventured to make sallies for foraging. The Count of Grammont, a colonel, had his horse killed under him one day while he parried with one arm a sabre stroke which struck his head and cut off three fingers; he was conducted to Prince Charles, who let him return on parole to Prague to have his wounds dressed.

Without the foresight of Sechelles, a commissary of the army, the French would have died of hunger and misery at Prague. Meat was the chief provision needed; the French soldiers whose taste differed from the Bohemian, had to eat horse flesh, and in the month of August, 1742, one hundred and fifty horses per week were killed. Soon the forage became so scarce and so dear that only four horses were kept to each company. It was with admiration that we saw the Marshal of Broglie have horse-flesh served on his table, and the French soldiers deprive themselves of half of their rations of bread to assist the poor women of the city of Prague; and yet the French had as many enemies as there were bourgeois and women in the city. Maria-Theresa was triumphant; but, always full of spite against us, her satisfaction was not yet complete: she would have preferred to have us as prisoners. This sad condition of affairs instead of cooling the French, excited their bravery; they made savage sallies, spiked a part of the Austrian cannon, carried away others, and baffled the enemy by brilliant tactics.

Two thousand Frenchmen under the command of the

Duke of Biron appeared, on the 22nd of August, 1742, outside of the city, preceded by a red flag, symbol of the resolution of making a bloody sally. In their enthusiasm they shouted to the Austrians, "*kill, kill!*" The grand duke advanced his troops, but they were beaten and dispersed; they lost a battery and could not prevent others from being spiked. We charged them at the point of the bayonet and sabre, and the carnage was frightful. Flags were captured; General Monti, an Austrian was made prisoner, and was carried in triumph to Prague under the eyes of Belle-Isle and Broglie who were watching the battle from the ramparts of the city.

On that memorable day we lost the Count of Teese, squire of the queen. The Duke of Biron, the Duke d'Estrées and the Prince des Deux-Ponts with several others were wounded.

Famine and distress increased in the city of Prague. Powder was lacking; there was no more salt; a chicken cost a ducat, and a pound of butter a hundred sous. Nevertheless the French persisted. The most delicate of officers would visit marshals Belle-Isle and Broglie, appear one moment in the dining-room, take a slice of roasted horse-flesh, and hurry to the ramparts or leave the city, to fight the Austrians. They were in constant fear of secret plots between the bougeois and the besiegers; each of the bougeois was a spy, a formidable enemy; police had to be maintained in the city, and the besieged Bohemians who were grudgingly supporting guests so troublesome had to be watched closely.

Fleury, who was an impassive observer at Issy, decided at last that reinforcements must be sent; so the Marshal de Maillebois received orders to proceed toward Prague. From that moment he was called "the General of the Mathurins," after a religious order whose profession consisted in liberating slaves. The grand duke and Prince Charles also desired to resume negotiations with the besieged and discuss the evacuation of the city. Belle-Isle with dignity informed them that the French soldier, indignant at the conditions which the grand duke had dared to offer, rejected any capitulation which savored of mercy. The enemy, disconcerted, cannonaded us for a time, and then raised the siege to go and assist Bavaria and to harass the march of Maillebois, leaving only a handful of Pandeurs and hussars in the neighborhood of Prague.

Maillebois reached Egra after making a circuit, but his army was disabled on account of fatigue and hardships. He received orders to leave the command and return to Versailles. Broglie succeeded him, and Maillebois, on his arrival, assumed that Broglie had demanded his recall.

Misery increased in the city of Prague. The cold was excessive, and the little fuel provided had been consumed ere winter had fairly set in; but the soldiers, though not acclimated, were cheerful, and eager to make sallies in the neighborhood in search of wood. But the grand duke had cruelly pillaged all the villages within two leagues, so that the French could not seize anything.

Belle-Isle finally received orders to evacuate the city of Prague in order to save the survivors of his army, which had so long fought famine and the rigors of winter. The country was then covered with snow and frost. The Austrians having destroyed the roads and blocked the bridges, the French had to cross mountains and dangerous defiles, and to withstand several desperate attacks by the hussars. Our soldiers had for food only a little bread, and for beverage snow. Belle-Isle nevertheless ordered the departure and, fruitful in resource, he spread the news that they were to forage as far as Konigsal. Before leaving, he ordered all the French to form themselves in one column; it was composed of fourteen thousand men, who marched out on the nights of the 16th and 17th of December, 1742, for Egra, which was still in our power.

That column, though exhausted by a long and disastrous siege, started with courage, forgetting hunger, cold, and thirst. At every moment it was attacked in the rear and flank by the hussars, who, flying around like swarms of insects which follow a traveler, harassed them continually. We can but admire the activity and the presence of mind of the Marquis of Vallière, who directed the management of the cannon in this movement. He had resources applicable to every contingency. In the twinkling of an eye his artillery could turn from one side to the other. The front and flanks of our army were bristling with cannon at all times. His activity was incredible. He decided the fate of battles, and contributed a great deal, by his new tactics, to make our artillery superior to that of all Europe. He was second in rank by title, but he directed everything himself, and all were anxious to assist him relative to the management of the thirty cannons brought over with us from Bohemia.

The moving troops lost neither timbals nor flags in their marches. In the night they proceeded slowly or slept on their arms, having only snow and fields of ice as a resting place, and unknown regions to travel in order to extricate themselves from the defiles which they had entered.

Unfamiliar with the country, they had to send scouts ahead to discover new passages, while defending their equipage which was continually attacked by the Hussars, and they had to suffer from the delay of moving their heavy baggage train.

In France the season was then bearable; it would have been so, even in Hungary, had our besieged army remained in Prague, but the ministers, warmly lodged in Versailles, ordered the departure, ignorant of the fact that in ascending the highest mountains in Europe they had to face a local and irresistible cold, which, added to that of the season, is fatal to most temperaments. The Marshal of Belle-Isle, no better informed, gave the order of departure, and our faithful army obeyed him. It left; it climbed the heights in the neighborhood of Egra, where are the springs of rivers, which empty into the Baltic and the Black Seas. It advanced slowly, was encompassed by a glacial atmosphere, seized by a cold unknown until then and which nothing but exercise and sufficient food could have counteracted. Seven thousand men perished in the expedition. The cold was so intense that the soldiers dropped by groups, having their noses, arms, feet and ears frozen. Some stood like statues, giving no signs of life, others were deprived of the use of their limbs. We know by experience that intense cold induces sleep and produces a sort of numbness which is followed by death. In a vain effort to awaken those unfortunates, the soldiers in passing pierced them with the extremity of their bayonets, and thus they perished wretchedly of fatigue, of cold, and abuse.

Many of those who had been unable to leave Prague, on account of sickness, recovered; but vigorous soldiers perished of cold in the retreat. Others were killed by Hussars, who were accustomed to the rigor of their climate, and acted with great swiftness in their skirmishes, easily protecting themselves from the cold. Those barbarians massacred without mercy, and plundered the unfortunate Frenchmen who yielded through fatigue. Sometimes they left them naked on the snow, sometimes they threw them in the peasant wagons where they perished of hunger and cold. Out of forty thousand men who left the frontier not eight thousand returned. All France was in mourning, and still the court spoke of "the glory of the king," "the honor of his arms" in that famous retreat, lauding it higher than that of Xenophon. The reception that Louis XV. gave to Beauvau, when he brought news of the army, whose situation was alarming all France, will suffice to give us an idea of his character.

Beauvau, minister of the king at the electorate of Bavaria, reached Versailles on the 9th of October, 1742, and gave the courtiers alarming news concerning the situation. He had gone to join our troops in Bohemia and was confined in the city from which he escaped in September with the Duke of Brissac. The king, who was extraordinarily indifferent, did not even speak to him. Madame de Mailly, who was still active and who wanted to maintain Belle-Isle and desired Beauvau to speak, complained to the king of his indifference. Louis finally caused Beauvau to return, spoke to him during supper of the French troops at Prague; of the genius of Belle-Isle, of the mistakes of Broglie, of his gloomy character since his attack of apoplexy, and of the need of replacing the troops of the King of Prussia by an equivalent number of French soldiers. Thus the king broke the silence, not for the purpose of speaking of our misfortunes which affected him little, but of our generals, according to the views of his mistress. The people who intrust affairs of government to the absolute power of kings will always be so treated.

The brave Chevert, who had remained in Prague, to console the sick, maintained the honor of the French name in the capital of Bohemia. Six thousand men, of whom two-thirds were sick, remained with him in the citadel, and the Austrian army having missed the Marshal of Belle-Isle, summoned Chevert to surrender. Chevert, who could not resist, asked an honorable capitulation, threatening to set fire to the four corners of the city and to blow up the place rather than desert it ignominiously. As he was fully capable of executing his threat, Chevert obtained the honorable terms which he demanded.

Thus ended the siege of Prague, where the French and Germans displayed much audacity and courage. The besiegers, who fought with much pertinacity, threw thirty-six hundred bombs over the besieged and fired six thousand cannon. The affair cost them ten thousand men, and France more than twenty thousand. The most of our soldiers who were crossing the mountains were attacked with violent fever. The frozen legs and arms of many others had to be amputated, and never a military expedition was so unskillfully planned and executed.

The Austrians having entering Prague were despotically cruel. Still irritated, although victorious, they avenged themselves unmercifully on the bourgeois who appeared to be attached to emperor Charles VII. They were bound and conducted to Vienna, and the state prisons of Austria were filled with them. The Queen of Hungary came to be crowned at Prague shortly after, while her troops checked emperor Charles VII. and pursued him from one point to another even to the very center of his electorate.

CHAPTER LVIII.

Changes in European politics after the disasters of the French in Bohemia and the conquest of Frederick.—England declares herself against us.—Sketch of her cabinet.—Inciting the pretender against the English.—Marshal de Noailles is appointed general of the army against the English.—Action of Ettingen.—The nephew of Noailles. Duke of Grammont, is the cause of a failure.—Broglie escapes from Bavaria.—Sad situation of the emperor Charles VII.—He implores the help of Maria-Theresa.—She profits by that situation.—End of the siege of Egra.—The French brought as captives to Bohemia.—Their courage in the country of the enemy.—Project of Maria-Theresa for the dismemberment of France.—Winter quarters in 1743.

THE misfortunes of the French in Bohemia were destined to alter the conduct of the cabinets of Europe. The King of Sardinia, unsettled in his course, sided with the stronger power. Holland and England had their troops ready to move against us. The King of Prussia, so active in comparison to others at the beginning of the war, but more discreet, more judicious and attentive to his interests since the conquest, stood in a state of watchfulness which disturbed Austria, the emperor and the court of France. M. de Voltaire was despatched to him as a favorite, either to tempt or to sound him. Louis XV. was begging for peace, at that time, in all the cabinets. We occupied in Europe only an inferior rank; Cardinal de Fleury had just died and the new ministry had not acquired any power. Amelot was indeed a dishonest man and had not followed a proper course with any European power. Under these circumstances, the King of Prussia did not care to secure a secret alliance with us, so Voltaire, speaking of literature and other matters, sounded him and concealed the true object of his mission, by asserting that he was constantly persecuted by the ministry, who had exiled him for his *Lettres Anglaises.* Frederick believed him, and the philosopher saying casually: "Maria-Theresa is strong with the English, Hollanders and Prussians, and will attack you on the first opportunity," the King of Prussia, who was full of love for his dear Silesia, and who became a roaring lion when any one spoke to him of retaking it, answered by singing a verse of an old song of the Regency:—

Ils seront reçus biribi,
A la façon de Barbari, mon ami.

"Let the French declare war against England, and I will join with them."

That was what the cabinet of Versailles wished to know. It had always made cultured French people serve as instruments to fathom Frederick. It had the services of the Abbé of Pradt, the same one who had been persecuted by priests in regard to a thesis. Marshal de Richelieu and Mme. de Châteauroux had called the attention of the king to our philosopher, who returned to France, crowned with greater laurels than the cleverest diplomat of that period.

We have an idea for what reason the King of Prussia distorts the truth when he says in his Memoirs, volume first, page 198, that prudence at the time of his defection, called for mild conduct, as he had to establish a sort of equilibrium between the houses of Austria and Vienna. The Queen of Hungary was on the edge of a precipice, said the king; a truce would give her the opportunity for rest and the King of Prussia was confident of breaking the truce when he wished. Such were his expressions.

It would appear by this statement that the King of Prussia abandoned France to relieve Austria from the effect of our blows; and yet the facts tend to prove on the contrary, that the prince abandoned us when we were unsuccessful; that he declared himself neutral when he wanted to rest his troops. He abandoned two strong powers to their old grievances to benefit by their quarrel.

The united armies of France and Bavaria which dominated all Bohemia at the end of 1741, lost upper Austria at the very beginning of 1742. Kevenhuller repulsed Ségur in Lintz, attacked him, compelled him to surrender, penetrated into Bavaria, expelled the allies, and took possession of Passaw, Bannaw and Munich. After six months of defeat sustained by the French and Bavarians, after six months under the rule of Maria-Theresa, the King of Prussia, by an understanding with England, combined with that princess, acknowledged her exploits, and concluded on the 11th of June, 1742, a treaty with her to which were invited England, Poland, Denmark and Holland. The Queen of Hungary renounced Silesia to him with the condition that he should withdraw his troops from the Austrian states;

and by so doing Frederick left the burden of the war to the French. Honest people will always detest such perfidies. Frederick did not deceive observers regarding his morals nor his character. Neither shall he deceive historians by his memoirs. Turgot, philosopher at the court and in the ministry, has left us verses which we preserve, because they reveal his character.

> Ce mortel profana mille talents divers.
> Il charma les humains dont il fit ses victimes.
> Barbare en actions et philosophe en vers,
> Il chanta les vertus et commit tous les crimes.
> Haï du dieu d'amour, cher au dieu des combats,
> Il inonde de sang l'Europe et sa patrie.
> Cent mille hommes par lui reçurent le trépas,
>   Et pas un n'en reçut la vie.

France, in spite of her reverses in Bohemia was lacking neither in activity or in intrigues. The shrewd Cardinal de Fleury had commanded Chetardie to effect a revolution in Russia. The young emperor, still in his cradle was dethroned by the agent of France, who replaced him by Princess Elizabeth. L'Estoc, a French sergeant, one musician and one hundred guards made the people acknowledge that princess without any disturbance; but France, which at that decision was willing to end the war which the King of Sweden, her ally, was sustaining against Russia, was poorly paid for her trouble. Elizabeth took advantage of the revolution, continued the war against Sweden and also her friendship with Maria-Theresa, her ally.

England, to assure her position, united with Austria and determined on inducing Prussia to abandon France, her enemy. There were disadvantages, undoubtedly, to an elector of Hanover, in weakening Austria and elevating the house of Brandenburg; but in granting something to the latter, the King of England was weakening the French and the Bavarians. The court of London employed the services of Lord Hindfort, to plan an alliance with Austria. The queen agreed, and King Frederick, who lost no opportunity to annoy Maria-Theresa, was very willing to break his agreement with us.

Lord Carteret, who had succeeded Walpole in the British ministry, conducted those intrigues. While the latter had acquired ministerial power in parliament through buying votes, the new minister knew how to acquire them by favoring the wishes of a nation. Fleury attempted to mediate in order to assure peace but the British minister answered by asking parliament to levy taxes in order to raise troops, and hire those of Hanover to march against us. He gathered in Flanders an army of sixteen thousand English and Hanoverians; he engaged six thousand Hessians to reinforce his troops. But as Sweden and the emperor had also purchased the services of a lot of Hessians for which they paid very highly, it transpired that they might go and kill each other in the field for the benefit of their master.

While England, Holland and the Hessian mercenaries were arming against us, the French Jesuits, and fanatics incited other enemies against the house of Brunswick.

The Stuarts were living in Rome in obscurity; Cardinal de Tencin, a lady of Mezières, and a certain Scotchman conceived the project of bringing them from their retirement to disturb the tranquillity of England. Tencin, state minister, thus repaid the debt he owed the Stuarts.

That project at first was known only by Amelot and Maurepas; they worked alone and secretly with the king, who ordered them to communicate it to Argenson at the end of the journey from Fontainebleau in 1743. The king himself spoke of it to Marshal Noailles, who greatly disapproved of it at first, and advanced the strongest and the most substantial reasons for abandoning the project. The king remained three weeks silent; but eight days after the return to Marly he permitted the marshal to speak of it to Cardinal de Tencin, who, being indebted to the House of the Stuarts, from whom he had bought the cardinal's hat, discussed secretly with the Duke de Richelieu, the mistress and the courtiers the advantage of reminding the English of the pretender, since they had united with Maria-Theresa against us. Such was the intrigue which set on foot the stirring up of the English through the pretender.

King George II., in the meanwhile, was marching at the head of his army.

On the other hand while our hopes were ruined in Bohemia and while the emperor was pursued from one post to another by the victorious troops of the Queen of Hungary, the cabinet of Versailles was sending out another small army, under the command of Marshal de Noailles. Noailles, who approached the Main after a skillful march, succeeded in checking the Austrians, English, Hanoverians and Hessians, who were encamped near Frankfort. He had orders to protect Lorraine, which the Austrians threatened and to follow our enemies everywhere. Noailles sent Ségur, who had so unskillfully managed our interests in Lintz, to reinforce Broglie who was in need of assistance in Bavaria, where the queen was victorious and where she had expelled the emperor. In that painful situation occurred the incident of Dettingen, which nearly crushed us. The united army of the enemy, camped on two lines, on the right bank of Main river, was enclosed on one side by that river and on the other by mountains, covered with wood.

Marshal de Noailles, posted on the other side of Main river, had an army as strong as that of the enemy, and capable of starving it, because he controlled all approaches. The King of England, at the head of his troops who were overcome by hunger, wished to evacuate this position. Noailles despatched the Duke of Grammont with five brigades of infantry and ordered him to establish himself in Dettingen, and to watch every movement until further instructions, which he would give him for his plan of attack. He had different brigades in other burghs, and was, in the meanwhile, cannonading the hostile army. In that operation the Marquis of Balliere distinguished himself, having six cannon batteries along the Main river, which did incredible damage.

The English army could only escape through a defile, having the French before it, and flanked by our cannon, while Noailles was waiting only for the moment when the vanguard and the first column should enter it. Grammont was then going to rush with impetuosity to the rear, while the cavalry of the king would charge them in the front. Such being the predicament of the first English column, their commander could not be relieved by his other columns as Valliere could crush them easily. It was, therefore, a question of making the King of England prisoner.

The frivolity of the nephew of Noailles was the cause of the failure. At the head of the French guards, not comprehending the views of the marshal, forgetting the precise orders to attack the exact place designated, he hastened beyond the ravine, dragging after him the cavalry of the king, and made way for the English army. Marshal de Noailles, consequently, instead of defeating King George, was compelled to ask assistance from his nephew. His cannon, instead of being directed against the English only, were pointed against both friends and enemies.

In this confusion Noailles succeeded however at the first engagement in putting to flight the first and second lines of the English cavalry. But the French guards, obliged to skirt the bank of the Main river, were assailed by the infantry, and the majority were drowned or shot; the English attacked our flanks, and our infantry, and a part of the cavalry retreated. The river was crossed under the protection of what remained of the troops of the king who fought with incredible courage.

The battle of Dettingen had only the effect of shedding much blood. The French missed a great opportunity; and the English withdrew adroitly from their dangerous predicament. The house of the king, for the first time in its history, lost two banners. The Duke of Rochechouart, the marquises of Fleury and of Sabran were killed. The Prince of Dombes, the Duke of Ayen, the Count of Eu, the Duke of Harcourt and the Duke of Boufflers were wounded. We lost one cannon, four banners and six flags. A large number of bodyguards, gendarmes, light cavalry, musketeers and officers of the guard were wounded or killed. All France was put in mourning through the disobedience of Grammont. The English, on the contrary, drank to his health in all their clubs and called him the liberator of their king. The British ministry declared that King George had won the battle, without acknowledging that the loss had been equal on both sides and that they had left on the field of battle six hundred dead or dying. The Marshal of Noailles entrusted the duke with the care of the wounded Englishmen. He distinguished himself by his humanity toward them, and treated them far better than the French; while the English, astonished at having escaped from the trap, established themselves on this side of Main river, but did not venture to attack us, although reinforced by ten thousand men.

At the news of the disaster the king showed indifference. A few courtiers called that action "the day of the broken sticks," because Grammont and his colleagues were not appointed as staff-marshals of France. Noailles was forced, after having spared his nephew to blame him publicly, to save his own name. "My too great kindness toward my nephew," he said, "has spoiled all that

I had accomplished." The expert generals confessed indeed that Noailles had planned a battle worthy of the greatest captain ; King George, without the blunder of Grammont, would have perished or been made a prisoner of war. But, instead of appointing a council of war to punish the disobedience of orders, Louis wrote to Marshal de Noailles that he feared that the wilfulness of the Duke of Grammont would do great harm in the army. What a king was Louis XV! He was the only one in France who condoned the conduct of Grammont. He even feared that his courtier would lose credit in the remnant of an army which he had caused to be cut to pieces, and excused him at the court and in his letters to Marshal de Noailles! The people in Paris alone showed some spirit. The French guards were called "the ducks of the Main river." Noailles, a devotee, was represented as Aaron praying to God while the Hebrews were slaughtered. A sword was hung at the entrance of his hotel bearing this inscription : "Thou shalt not kill." Noailles rallied his troops in the neighborhood of Steingeim and there encamped his army.

The emperor Charles VII., driven out of Bavaria, was wandering in Germany, without a kingdom and with the remains of an army but no supplies. To complete his misfortune, Broglie abandoned Bavaria without any order from the king, so this phantom of an emperor, deserted by all, was reduced to accept from Marshal de Noailles forty thousand écus, which that general lent him for his maintenance. The first exploits of that prince had been as fortunate and fearless as his distress was great and deplorable; he proposed to Maria-Theresa to abandon France, provided she left him her hereditary principality.

Charles VII. was an honest man. He even had some valor; but was without steadiness and without breadth in his views. On the 13th of January, 1743, he signed a treaty with the queen Maria-Theresa, who was slowly forcing that imperial shadow to return finally to oblivion. She bought afterwards the neutrality of the King of Prussia by pretending, in a treaty, to give him Silesia, postponing until brighter opportunities the project of reconquering that great province. In the meanwhile, gathering all her forces against us and diminishing the number of her enemies, Maria-Theresa determined to dismember our possessions. The conquest of Lorraine was her ambition. That province was a morsel which she coveted. She often said that she would reduce France to the condition in which it was at the time of Hugh Capet.

The cabinet of Versailles was troubled at the loss of its allies and at the actual degradation of the emperor Charles VII., its instrument. Cardinal de Tencin, state minister, discussed the advisibility of abandoning Lorraine to the King of Naples and to Maria-Theresa. Two years of disastrous war had destroyed the internal peace and happiness that France owed to the able ministry of Cardinal Fleury. Our troops, fatigued by war, wished to rest. Noailles, the commander, mentioned the Count of Saxe as an officer worthy of commanding them and performing acts of brilliancy. The king consequently asked Broglie to resign the command of his army to the Count of Saxe, under the orders of Noailles, and to return himself to Strasburg ; from this moment he was disgraced.

Broglie, harassed by a few light troops of Prince Charles, had taken refuge on this side of the Rhine. Two hundred grenadiers or dragoons who escorted him were cut to pieces. All France was indignant at this new proof of the inability of our generals. Even the lords of the court, accustomed to praise equally the mistakes and the good actions of the government, proclaimed very loudly that, if Broglie had been ordered to defend Bavaria, he remained unpunished for his treason, and if he had received secret orders to recall the army and escape, it was very cruel to punish him by exile. The king, indifferent to his administration, was as ignorant as the public. He wrote to the Duke de Richelieu : " M. de Broglie had no orders to leave Bavaria, he is a victim of politics, but I have forgotten the past and think only of the remedy for it. There is no dishonor in being defeated, but rather in retreating as we have been doing for two years."

Each day brought news of other losses. The garrison left at Egra composed partly of the remains of the army of Prague, was isolated in that unknown land and left without assistance after the retreat of Broglie from Bavaria. The Queen of Hungary did not even honor them by a cannon shot, but summoned them to surrender. While waiting for the besieged to make a decision, she left them starving and perishing. After making bloody sallies, and vigorous and desperate efforts for relief, the besieged considered it a great success if they returned to the city with a few radishes. Many were killed in their sorties, but no loss could restrain these unfortunate soldiers, compelled by famine to forage under such difficulty. They preferred their sufferings to the ignominy of surrender, threatening, like Chevert, to blow up the place. The frightened citizens left Egra not to return, and carried away all the coined money. The French governor had to coin some tin sous or obsidional pieces.

The titled lords who had withdrawn from Prague had not stopped at Egra, but had abandoned it, they said, to the little nobility and inferior officers, like Belle-Isle. The titled nobility of the court had forgotten, undoubtedly, that they were neither the oldest, nor the true nobility of France; the latter lives by itself within the provinces or in the body of an army. That explains why those unfortunate noblemen, not very important, according to the opinion of that time, had been chosen for the emergency in Egra. They were not wanting in bravery; they fought with courage and experienced all the horrors of the siege of Prague repeated. During the whole month of June they were without good meat. The month of July they had only horse-flesh. Desselleurs, our minister at Dresden, tried to send them a few oxen, but the Hussars captured them. The besieged, having no more horses to devour, had recourse to dogs and cats; the brave Collo-Wrath, an Austrian lord, worthy of being mentioned in our memoirs, imitating Henry IV. under such circumstances, caused a few calves to be given to d'Hérouville, who commanded the place. Let us preserve in our history the names of our brave

French captains, whom the high nobility sacrificed to danger and famine; their names were not celebrated like those of the lords who had risen in the court through favors and through mistresses; but their courage responded to the integrity of their principles, and they shared with the common soldiers the horrors of the famine.

Finally, after three months of siege, Maria-Theresa made prisoners of war of the brave and unfortunate Frenchmen,—officers and soldiers, who, having escaped from the siege of Prague, found only a repetition of misfortunes at Egra. Their skin was livid, yellow, shining; in fact they were only skin and bone. Disarmed, vanquished, dragged into Bohemia like criminals, but always French, always proud and resolute, they kissed the cannon, the arms and the French flag which the enemy carried triumphantly into Bohemia. Imbued with love of their country, even when in chains, they showed their enthusiasm in an unknown and hostile land. The officers and soldiers encouraged one another. Thus ended the unsuccessful expedition of the French in Bohemia. Emperor Charles VII. was from that moment left without hope and resources, obliged to depend upon the good-will of Maria-Theresa. The Hussars and the Pandeurs had devastated his electorate; only his paintings, curios, cabinets, archives, jewels, and some provisions and artillery which he had at Ingolstadt, in a place of safety, were left to him. Maria-Theresa, who finally consented to make a treaty with him, left him a few troops; but she required him to leave in her power the strong military positions in his electorate and to promise not to send troops for their recovery before the final treaty of peace. After having thus divested him, she promised him supplies of food which he never received. On the contrary she put Bavaria under contribution like a hostile country. Her officers governed it like an Austrian province, although it had already been pillaged and plundered by the Pandeurs of Trenk and the Hussars of Menzel. No prince of the empire had the courage to remonstrate with Maria-Theresa or to tell her that she was the plague of Germany and was degrading the imperial majesty, a common property of the whole Germanic body. No prince dared remind her that she was the granddaughter of a miserable count of Hapsburg; none showed the desire to consign her to her former oblivion. A constant division, between the many princes composing the German confederation, prevented any coalition against her. No one, except Frederick felt that Austria had subdued them, and was still dominating them. The ecclesiastical electors sided with the House of Austria, because it was persecuting the protestants. There was in Germany, a great inclination among the Roman prelates to maintain tyranny and despotism. They knew that they were one of its ornaments, and that immense riches were their reward. Those prejudices were so strong that the ecclesiastical Elector of Cologne openly favored the faction of Maria-Theresa to the detriment of Emperor Charles VII., her brother.

This Princess, a clever and courageous woman, with the crafty qualities of her own sex and the energy of ours, combined versatility with assurance. She never missed an opportunity, at the different courts of Germany, to make known her sufferings at the beginning of the war, and to portray the emperor as an unfortunate and ambitious man, abandoned, and pursued by fate, who had tried to assume high rank at the expense of an orphan. To offset those insinuations of the queen, France assured her through ambassadors and by letters, that the succession of Austria was doubtful. They called Emperor Charles VII. *the Marionnette des Français.* The King of Prussia alone possessed courage more adapted to his character than to his strength. All Germany was docile, and he was the only one who could move Maria-Theresa with fear, combined with esteem and regard, due to his successful and bold expeditions, and compel her to come to an understanding.

Conqueror of the emperor, whom she degraded; of the French, whom she expelled from her domains; of the King of Prussia from whom she bought neutrality, Maria-Theresa was still scheming for the dismemberment of the French kingdom. Lorraine especially attracted her.

This province, in spite of the paternal government of Stanislaus, was not French; in those critical moments, it was wavering between the Bourbons and the Austrians. The Lorraine princes were always somewhat beloved but everywhere else Lorraine found only despotism and absolute authority, and two courts equally anxious to speculate upon the people to better nourish their own vanity and the vanity of the nobles. Stanislaus, a keen observer, compelled the Lorraines to esteem him. He was the true conqueror of that great province. He knew how to move and pacify the discontented, and by benefactions to make them accept the government of the Bourbons. The secret efforts of Maria-Theresa to plant sedition there were wholly unsuccessful. And yet France had as much authority over that province through her officers and commissaries as if it had been of the old domain. Stanislaus, instead of ruling as an absolute prince, was no more than a formal governor. Although the Beauveau, the Choiseul and other nobles of that province were welcomed at the French court, there was in the country a remnant of attachment to the Lorraine princes, an attachment which Maria-Theresa tried in vain to make use of in her designs on that province. She sent Hussars to the neighborhood, under Menzel. Prince Charles, moreover, proceeded towards upper Alsace of which Marshal Coigny had just received the command, and apparently desired to penetrate into Lorraine. Menzel and the writers of Austria, who were publishing the threats of the queen, asserted that the interior of France was to be invaded as the French invaded Bohemia. But those threats came to naught. Being divided, the Austrians withdrew with as much promptness as Broglie had exhibited in abandoning Bavaria. Even the King of England, remembering the perils which he had incurred at Dettingen, and threatened also by the season, sent his troops to Brabant, Westphalia and Holland for their winter quarters. Those 140,000 men who had made us withdraw from Spain, who had expelled us from Bavaria, who had made us retreat to France and who had reached the Rhine, by threatening France with an invasion, were finally forced to retreat in disgrace.

CHAPTER LIX.

Maurepas persuades the king to lead his armies and leave Madame de Châteauroux.—The king quits his orgies at Choisy and his favorites to command in the camp.—The Duke of Richelieu recalls Mme. de Châteauroux.—The whole army is scandalized.—The Swiss songs against the king and against the Duchess de Châteauroux.—The king leaves that army and goes to Alsace.—He is followed by Mme. de Châteauroux.—He is taken ill at Metz.

MAUREPAS, unable to explain the passion of the king for Mme. de la Tournelle, or the installation of that favorite at the court, or her dukedom on the land of Châteauroux; seeing, moreover, that she was always bitter against himself, always determined to avenge herself and expel him from the court, set snares for her in other ways.

He planned to break up the secret and frequent conversations she had with the king, who was enamoured of her, and to further his purpose he informed Louis that it was necessary for him in order to revive our ancient glory to take command personally of our forces. Maurepas had an easy task in proving that the presence of the king was required to excite the courage of the soldiers. He united for that purpose with the Marshal of Noailles, who had at heart the welfare of the state. The capital and the provinces exclaimed loudly against the orgies of the king at Choisy; the ministers were grieved at not being able to gain admittance when the prince was secluded with his favorites. Public sentiment seemed to favor Maurepas at first, and emboldened him in persuading Louis to abandon the castle, where he disgraced himself.

Mme. de Châteauroux was dazzled at a project which seemed to her, at first, noble and plausible. Like Mme. de Montespan, whose genius she possessed, she approved of having the king manage his own affairs for two reasons: First, as it would remove Maurepas, at that time confidential minister; and second, she would participate in the glory of the king and of the state. Her interests, and her inclination both contributed to support that great project. Since the death of Fleury all France had complained of the conduct of the monarch, and especially of the management of his affairs at the hands of his ministers. She heard the wishes of the French and respected them.

The hour of the people had come. The respectable section of the clergy was deploring the incestuous life and the nocturnal orgies of the king, and his frequent journeys to Choisy. The people were murmuring at the expenses incurred by Louis and at the costly furnishings in the country house where he repaired, it was said, to drown himself in the pleasures of the table, and indulge all sorts of voluptuousness. They recalled the dissipations of the princes of the Orient, who, when weary of the cares of empire, left it in the hands of the vizirs while they ruined their lives in the seraglio.

Mme. de Châteauroux, obliged to attend at Versailles to the conventionalities of receptions, enjoyed her sojourn at Choisy, where she was sovereign, and, moreover, endeavored to make herself agreeable to the dissatisfied nation. She thought by arousing the king from his indolence, and by inducing him to take the head of his armies, she would win the esteem and affection of the public. Leagued with d'Argenson against Maurepas, she believed she could maintain her credit in spite of the efforts of the other ministers, and, through Richelieu's influence, she might perhaps be invited to accompany the king even to the camp. But Maurepas, who knew her intentions and dreaded the effect of her sojourn in the army, had the dexterity to persuade Louis that if he wished to enjoy, as a king, the affection of his subjects he must sacrifice Mme. de Châteauroux and leave her in Paris, as Louis XIV. under the same circumstances had given up Mme. de Montespan. Louis XV., not having reached that desperate point where he was willing to scorn public opinion, accepted this salutary advice; he triumphed over Richelieu and over Mme. de Châteauroux, and it was decided, contrary to their expectations, that she should not go to the army with the king. But Richelieu and the favorite obtained the assurance that Maurepas should not go, that he should not even remain in Paris; so he was sent to visit the maritime provinces on business concerning his department.

Louis, without energy nor will, listened now to his mistress and now to his favorite minister. He listened to Maurepas, who proved to him the necessity of keeping his favorite away from the army, and he listened to his favorite, who persuaded him that Maurepas, by his seductive entreaties would break their union. Anxious to please both, he sent Maurepas away and left the Duchess of Châteauroux in Paris. Richelieu, who was to accompany the king as his aide-de-camp, entreated the favorite to submit, with the assurance that she should come to the army when Louis should have refrained for a while from the amusements of love.

The prince displayed no taste for the pomp and circumstance of royalty, which Fleury had taught him in his infancy to avoid and to fear, and he had no ambition for conquest. Till then, his tastes were only for the amusements of a cabinet at Versailles and for tranquillity at Choisy, where he liked to divest himself of royalty and all its cares, and lead the life of a simple country squire of that time. Mme. de Châteauroux, on the contrary, reigned as a sovereign, surrounded by admirers. Such was the seraglio of Choisy, which the ambition of the courtiers hastened to its dissolution. But by sending the king to the army, they defeated their own ends, for the king kept them all away from him during the sieges and battles.

The royal family, relieved through these arrangements of the favorite minister and of the mistress, endeavored to approach the king. The queen showed her anxiety for more intimacy with Louis, who for ten years had not lived with her as a husband. The favorite and the courtiers had persuaded the prince that he was neither loved nor esteemed by the queen, whatever outward submission and respect were shown by her. The princess, informed of those accusations, timid and undecided as to the best method of obtaining the favor of the king, thought of writing to him, as was her custom. For when she wished to propose something new to him, she stammered and could not find suitable words. Nevertheless she went every morning to the bedside of the king, but ceremoniously and with so many attendants that she could not speak to him privately.

On the 16th of April, after her usual visit, and having occupied the preceding day in composing a letter, she handed it herself to Louis with much hesitation. In that letter she offered to accompany his Majesty if he wished it.

A few days after, she solicited a position as dame of the palace in the formation of the household of the Dauphine, for the daughter of the Marquis of Tesse. She went herself to ask that favor from the king at the *petit lever*, which was the true rising of the king, while the *grand lever* was only the ceremonial. Louis did not answer her; but the next day, Mme. de Talleyrand came to inform the queen that the king had appointed instead Mme. de Périgord. But the refusal only served to increase her desire to accompany the king to his army in Flanders.

On the 2nd of May, the king took supper with the queen, and no allusion was made to any journey. After supper he entered the queen's apartments and had a quarter of an hour of conversation with her which was of a very trivial nature; because he was interesting only with his mistresses in the small apartments. He left her without saying a word, and gave the order to retire at half past one. He entered his room, as if he were to sleep but instead changed his clothes, bade affectionate farewell to the Dauphine assigned the different places in his household, and despatched to the queen four lines saying that the expense would prevent her accompanying him to the frontier. Afterwards he sent to Plaisance, a country house of Paris-Duvernay, brother of Montmartel, his two mistresses, and in spite of the entreaties of a few courtiers he took with him Father Prusseau, a jesuit, his confessor, in case of need; unwilling even to leave him for a week in Paris, to confess the Dauphine. He wrote a secret letter to the Archbishop of Paris, and official ones to all the prelates. He went to the chapel to offer prayer and entered his carriage with the first squire, Marshal de Noailles, and Meuse. The bishop of Soissons, his captain, and the Marquis of Verneuil, secretary of the cabinet followed him. Tencin left for Lyons, Maurepas was sent to Provence to visit the ports. Orri, Saint-Florentin and the chancellor remained in Paris to manage the affairs of the state and the capital. The prince intended to reach his army in Flanders on the 3rd of May, 1744.

Although Louis had loved publicly, since 1742, only Mme. de Châteauroux, his attention was often attracted not only by the ladies whom he called to Choisy without inviting their husbands, but to all the handsome women who were at his disposal. He noticed in 1743, in the forest of Sénart, Mme. d'Etiole, well known since as Mme. la Marquise de Pompadour, who confessed her love for the king. She was beautiful as a goddess. On his return from hunting, the king and his favorites spoke of her with fondness, and Mme. de Châteauroux wrote to the Duke of Richelieu, who was directing her conduct:—"If the frivolous character of the king had kept me away from him, I would have died of sorrow, but I would not have taken any steps to bring him back. You know him, and he will acknowledge my right."

The Duchess of Chevreuse spoke one day to the king of the *petite d'Etiole;* Mme de Châteauroux approached her very gently, but stepped on one of her corns, crushed her finger and caused her to faint. The next day she paid a visit to the duchess and offered an apology by saying:—"Do you know that there is a rumor of securing to the king the little d'Etiole?" The king left, overcome by the beauty of little d'Etiole, and was received with transports of joy at Valenciennes. Having reached his army, he invited five or six persons to dinner and in the evening there were twenty-five or thirty seats, occupied by the princes and the general officers. The queen, on the contrary, was living sorrowfully at Versailles; playing the hurdy-gurdy, her favorite instrument and amusing herself the best she could with the ladies Flavacourt, Luynes and Faudoars. Mme de Châteauroux and Mme. de Lauraguais were already at Plaisance, where Louis sent them daily despatches. It was on this occasion that—Marshal de Noailles, having absolute command over the king, and the Duke of Ayen, deserving more and more his confidence—the Duke of Richelieu, fearing that Noailles would supersede him, advised the Duchess of Châteauroux to go to Flanders even without an order from the king. He assured the favorite that the moment for benefitting by her assiduous attentions had come. He announced to the king the journey of "l'Amour blind and disobedient, so worthy of forgiveness when he removed his bandage," and assured the prince that he would he held responsible for any possible result. He had already sent for his former friend, the Duchess of Modène, who had been in Paris for a few months, and who had preserved, after twenty years of absence, the old love which she had had for him. So, on the 8th of June, Mme. de Châteauroux and Mme. de Lauraguais left Plaisance, during the night, so as to avoid the shouting of the people to whom they had already made themselves odious, and repaired to Lille. Two days before, they had gone to present their respects to the queen, who received them with so much cordiality that Mme. de Châteauroux was embarrassed. They left in a gondola with six seats in company with Mademoiselle and Madame de Bellefonds. Other friends were with them, and everywhere were relays ready as far as Lille, to hasten their arrival.

The queen was less patient with Mme. de Modène than with the two favorites of the king. The latter had asked for the orders of the queen before her departure for Lille; the princess answered her with vivacity:—"Make your silly trip as you wish; it doesn't concern me." Another friend, Mme. la Princess of Conti, who was determined to please all the mistresses and all the ministers repaired to Lille, after Mme. de Chateauroux. She even desired to have her daughter, the Duchess of

Chartres accompany her. In vain they urged the sincere love of the Duke of Chartres for her and of the necessity of leading a quiet life in order to bear children; Mme. the Duchess found it agreeable to go to war, to follow her mother and to live with her husband.

At that time, the capital was murmuring at the scandalous journey of the two sisters, escorted by three princesses, and they were called *les Coureuses*, without mentioning their names. Louis, who had been praised to the sky when he left his orgies to take the command of the troops, was criticised for having sent for his favorites and for showing a bad example to his officers, who had left their wives and their mistresses to serve in his camp.

This strange visit gave rise to still greater murmurs in the army; it was said that women had come to interfere with the duties of the king. The Swiss, with their jovial character and truthfulness, ridiculed Louis and his favorite in their songs, and their voices reached his tent. The old officers, more scandalized than the young, taught the latter an old song which they had known for fifty years, and the whole army sang, in the king's hearing, the famous verses:—

Ah! madame Enroux,
Je deviendrai fou
Si je ne vous baise, etc.,
Ah! madame Enroux,
J'ne deviendrai fou, etc.

The king, the favorites, and the Duke of Richelieu were frightened, and had to give way to the storm. The king, after taking Ytras, stopped at Lille with Mme. de Châteauroux and her sister Lauraguais. He left them afterwards to visit the principal cities of Flanders, while the ladies repaired to Dunkirk to await his arrival, and found the Count of Maurepas returning from his journey.

It was there that the king heard that Prince Charles had crossed the Rhine on the 13th of July, and determined, contrary to the advice of his council, to go personally and relieve Alsace. The ladies, not discouraged by their cold reception in Flanders, still followed him, and in every city which they visited on that long journey, the grand marshal of the dwellings always secured a communication between the apartments of the king and those of the duchess. It was then that the love of the favorite for the handsome d'Agenois was awakened. Having learned at Rheims, that the duke had been wounded at the taking of Château-Dauphin, she experienced a return of affection for this former lover. The king, who discovered it, was much displeased. Knowing that the king was coming to Metz, they provided apartments, with the necessary communications for the enjoyment of the two lovers without scandalizing the public. The favorite had apartments in the Abbey of Saint-Arnould, which the bishop of Marseilles had let to the first president, who had vacated them for this purpose. Mme. de Châteauroux being too distant from the king, the court provided covered galleries for their communication, although the people of Metz seemed to be much scandalized. In vain the Prior of the Abbey assured them that the gallery had been made for the king to go to church from his apartments; the people proclaimed loudly "the communication has not been made for the purpose of going to church, but to sleep with Mme. de Châteauroux," and as they had closed up four streets to make way for this gallery, the people, gathering in crowds, scoffed at the prince and his favorite, and proclaimed loudly that the king had no business to come to Metz and give such a bad example to the provençal women.

At that time the king was taken ill with a violent attack of fever.

CHAPTER LX.

Continuation of the illness of the king.—It is declared dangerous.—Two factions at the court of Louis.—Project to expel Madame de Châteauroux through the confessor.—The favorite and the Duke de Richelieu negotiate with the confessor.—Character of Father Prusseau, Jesuit and confessor of the king.—Interviews of the confessor, of the favorite and the Duke de Richelieu.—The confessor leaves them in doubt.—Despair of the favorite.—Good words from the Duke de Richelieu.

FROM the fourth of August to the 12th, it was known, by symptoms constantly growing more dangerous, that the illness of the king was alarming, and Cassera, a physician of Metz, declared that he would not be responsible for his life. But, he added, that if he were well attended, he might recover, especially if he were left alone. From that time on the doors of the king's apartments were closed by order of the Duke de Richelieu, through an understanding with the favorite. The sick man was attended only by his most faithful servants, by the two sisters, and by the Duke de Richelieu, who was their guide and adviser.

The royal princes, and the grand officers of the crown, deprived of their duties because the favorites wished to serve the king alone, gathered in the ante-room of the king and formed a party. Bouillon, La Rochefoucauld, Villeroy ; the first squire, the Bishop of Soissons, first chaplain, and Father Prusseau, Jesuit and confessor of the king were at the head of it.

The two mistresses, the Duke de Richelieu, Meuse, the household servants, and the aides-de-camp formed another group. The Duke of Pénthievre had been delayed on his way by smallpox.

Among the party of the princes, it was proposed to facilitate the approach of the confessor who was kept at a distance by the favorites for fear of his effect upon Louis. It was decided moreover to take advantage of his religion and of the terrors caused by his sickness, to dismiss Mme. de Châteauroux with her sister and dismiss the Duke de Richelieu, detested by them, because he enjoyed great favor as a confidant of the pleasures of the king, and because he prevented them from discharging their duties. Secretly inflamed against each other, the two factions remained for a time silent, but the princes becoming indignant at not gaining prompt admittance to the sick chamber soon indulged in sharp recriminations.

Madame de Châteauroux declared the justice of her course. "Nothing is more fitting," she said, "than the desire of serving the king and fulfilling the duties of one's function; but at the same time nothing is more proper than to submit to the wishes of the king himself when he speaks: that is the first duty; without his command, I myself would not have the right to remain in his room.

Mme. de Châteauroux was well aware that Fitz-James, Bishop of Soissons, chaplain of the king, and the Bishop of Metz, had a secret understanding with the royal princes to influence the king to confess his sins, by warning him of the danger of his sickness. She knew that her disgrace would be the result of an absolution. To prevent that humiliation she resolved to keep away the confessor, the chaplain, the royal princes, and the grand officers of the crown; she let them enter the king's chamber only during mass, and took care that they were promptly ushered out when it was over. In her embarrassment she held many conversations with the Duke de Richelieu, and the four valets, who had charge of the pleasures of the king, regarding her interests. In their dilemma they decided to consult with the confessor of the king, Father Prusseau, a Jesuit. They made him enter a small cabinet, near the bed of the king, and the Duchess of Châteauroux asked him if she would be compelled to leave in case the king wished to confess and receive the sacraments; but the Jesuit manifested his doubts by hesitating and giving her only unintelligible answers.

"Speak, Father Prusseau," she said impatiently. "Do not permit me to be dismissed publicly; the reputation of the king will be less compromised if I leave secretly, while if I am publicly dismissed it will insult the king, and dishonor my name." Prusseau, who was shrewd and clever, did not wish to insult Mme. de Châteaureaux, if he could keep a precious position, dear to his order, without doing so. He did not wish to tell what he intended to do, but by not speaking out he would provoke the favorite and the Duke de Richelieu who were naturally impatient. Forced to give them some answer, Prusseau repeated in his embarrassment, "Madame, the king may not confess his sins."

"He will," replied the duchess, "for the king is religious as I am myself, and I shall be the first to exhort him to confess. I should not like to take upon myself the responsibility of not having him do so; but it a question of preventing a scandal. Shall I be dismissed? tell me."

Prusseau, as embarrassed as the duchess, hesitated, saying that it was not possible to answer in advance; that the past life of the king was unknown to him; the conduct of the confessor must depend on the contrition of the penitent, and that, as he personally had no unfavorable knowledge of the intimacies of the king with Mme. de Duchess, the result depended on the confession of the king.

"If only confession is required," replied madame, "I acknowledge to you, Father Prusseau, that I have sinned with the king as much as he desired, and by habit. Is that enough to have me dismissed by Louis on his death-bed? Is there no excuse for a king?"

The knowledge that the king was seriously ill increased the embarrassment of Prusseau. It had been secretly resolved in the party of the princes to send the duchess away if the king confessed his sins; but, if the king recovered without confession, Prusseau did not wish to expose himself to the resentment of the mistress nor be discharged himself after the king's convalescence, if he claimed her again. In that state of doubt, Prusseau wished to retire without giving any decision; but the Duke de Richelieu at the entrance of the cabinet kept the door half closed, opposed his exit, and exclaimed: "Ah! Father Prusseau, be gallant towards the ladies; grant now to Mme. the Duchess de Châteauroux, the privilege of the court without scandal. Your 'perhaps' and your 'ifs' distress us." But the Jesuit, patient and resolved to endure everything, persisted in his silence, so Richelieu, seeing that he could not move him, rushed to Father Prusseau, and embraced him with his usual gallantry, saying in a jovial manner: "I see, Reverend Father, that you are not moved at the beauties of women;" and embracing him more closely still, added: "Do for me, who have always loved the Jesuits, what the most gallant fathers of the church have allowed the confessors of kings to do in such circumstances." Prusseau, still inflexible, persisted in his mysterious silence, dreading to be pursued some day by the duke and the duchess if the king recovered without confession, and unwilling to say in advance what he would do.

Mme. de Châteauroux was distressed. Every moment was precious to her, and her attraction and her gracefulness alone remained with which to persuade Prusseau. She touched with her soft hand the chin of the Jesuit, and said, with tears in her eyes: "I promise you, Father Prusseau, that if you will avoid a scandal, I will withdraw from the chamber of the king during his illness. I will return to the court only as his friend, and never as his mistress. I will convert myself and you will confess me." But Prusseau, still inflexible, persisted in leaving them both in doubt regarding what he would do if he confessed the king.

During that scene, the princes and the grand officers of the crown studied in silence what the canons of the church—the oldest and the most unused—prescribed in such circumstances. As the death of a king, the fall of ministers, the disgrace of a favorite courtesan, are the great revolutions of despotic empires, the two factions were expecting great results. The ministers, peaceful observers of the quarrels between the favorites and the royal princes, awaited silently the issue of the fight against the princes' authority. The faction of Maurepas and of d'Argenson sided with the latter.

If the king died, the devout Jesuit court of the future king and queen would be proclaimed victorious.

If the king returned to life without confession, Richelieu, Mme. de Châteauroux and their friends would triumph over the princes and great officers of the crown.

CHAPTER LXI.

The Count of Clermont succeeds in remonstrating with the king in regard to the removal of the princes.—Favorable answer of the king to his request.—The Bishop of Soissons moves the heart of the king.—Madame de Châteauroux wins him back to her.—The Duke de Richelieu interrupts communication between the king and the princes.—Resentment of the Duke of Bouillon, who withdraws from the court.—La Puironis recalls him.—In vain he entreats the king to confess his sins.—Weakening of Louis.—He sends for his confessor.—Dismissal of Mme. de Châteauroux and of Mme. de Lauraguais.—Scene in the chamber of the dying king.—The king receives the last sacraments.—Symptoms of his illness.—He is given up by his ministers, courtiers and physician.—A strong emetic saves his life.

IN the antechamber of the dying king they were discoursing on the course of future events, every one betraying both fear and hope. In these extreme circumstances, the princes determined to expel the favorite and to dismiss the Duke de Richelieu, held a meeting on the advisability of opening the doors of the king's chamber contrary to orders. But they were all in such great confusion that no one dared attempt so bold an action. Finally it was resolved that the Count of Clermont should present himself to the king and convey to him the sympathy of the lords of his court. Clermont, with his usual military indifference, consented to enter the chamber and spoke thus to the dying king: "Sire, I cannot believe that your majesty has any intention of depriving the royal princes of the satisfaction of receiving personally news in regard to your health. We do not wish to be impertinent, but we desire, on account of our love for you, to have the privilege of entering a few moments and proving to you that we are actuated by no other motives. Sire, I withdraw." Louis was not offended by this speech but begged the Count of Clermont to remain near him.

After this first success, the princes prepared the way to his confession. To influence the king, the Bishop of Soissons, before mass, spoke to him of the necessity of confessing his sins; the king answered: "It is not yet time." Mme. de Châteauroux had persuaded him in the morning that he was not so sick as reported. Fitz-James who had an exhortation all prepared, insisted, but the king said: "I have too great a headache and too many things to unravel to confess myself at present. . . ." "But," replied Fitz-James, "your majesty might begin, and finish to-morrow." But the king wished to rest and Fitz-James was forced to withdraw.

Mme. de Châteauroux, fearful of the steps taken, wished to shake hands with the king, to embrace him affectionately and to pay him her usual respects. The king, influenced by Fitz-James, repulsed her and said: "Princess," (a name given to her) "I think that I am doing wrong in my condition, to allow you to caress me." Mme. de Châteauroux insisted. "Perhaps it will be necessary to separate," Louis said to her. "Very well," replied the favorite apparently offended and releasing the hands of the king. The Duke de Richelieu, as distressed as the duchess, asked the Duke of Bouillon, while waiting, what the Bishop of Soissons had said to the king to cause him such agitation. "I know nothing," responded the courtier, "because it does not concern me; but at such a time no one could blame him for doing his duty." The Duke de Richelieu realized from that moment what "that duty" would be, and resolved to exclude everybody from the king's chamber so as to prevent a confession which was so well prepared that it would cause the ruin of the two mistresses and the favorite. As the princes, grand officers and their followers were besieging the room so as not to lose any favorable moment, the Duke de Richelieu came to inform them at eleven o'clock at night, that the king did not wish to admit them. This order deprived them of all communication with him. It was then that the Duke of Bouillon rose and told the Duke de Richelieu, that, as they must obey the order from Wignerot, he would withdraw. He then left the antechamber.

On the 12th, the next day, La Puironie, a surgeon, paid a visit to Bouillon, and told him that the king could not live two days, that it was necessary for him to confess, and that it was his duty as grand chamberlain to announce it to the king. Bouillon was quite ready enough to perform his duty, but he did not wish to compromise himself with the Duke de Richelieu. He therefore sent word to Champenetz and commanded him to tell the king that he was as dismayed as the other lords at not being allowed to enter his chamber. Champenetz took it upon himself to mention the fact to Louis. The dying prince, listening to everybody, and unwilling to displease any one, summoned the princes and all those who were in the room before mass, so that their party was finally victorious. Bouillon expressed to the king the great sorrow which he felt in being unable to perform his duties. "I would be very willing," said the king to the discontented of each group, "but it is not yet time." Mme. de Châteauroux and Richelieu had given him to understand that the officers of the crown desired only to make a display in assisting the king, and that he was not ill enough to receive the last sacrament. Richelieu, continually feeling his pulse and assuming the part of a physician, swore by his life and his word of honor that the king had only a slight disorder. But the illness of the king was growing worse, so that once when he was addressing the lords of the court, he fainted. For a few minutes he was unconscious and the attendants were alarmed. Gradually the king came to his senses, but in recovering he exclaimed three times, in a loud voice: "My broth! My broth!" and "Father Prusseau! quick Father Prusseau! adieu, I am dying, I shall see you no more." On his arrival the king confessed his sins to the Jesuit, and calling the Duke of Bouillon to his death-bed he said: "You can assist me, henceforth there will be no more obstacles; I have sacrificed the favorite and my protegés to religion and to what the church expects from a king and the oldest son of the church." The Bishop of Soissons was victorious. To enjoy his triumph without loss of time, he hastened to deliver the fatal order of Louis to the two sisters.

Enclosed in an adjoining cabinet with the Duke de

Richelieu, they awaited the event with fearful agitation. They heard the folding doors open, and saw Fitz-James, his hand on the knob, advancing; his hair was disordered his eyes were glittering and his face was animated; he said to them:—"The king summons you, mesdames, to withdraw immediately." He commanded afterwards that the wooden gallery which communicated with the chambers of the duchess should be destroyed in order to convince the people of their separation.

The two favorites were stunned and spoke not a word; but the Duke de Richelieu, who well knew the burning passion of Louis for the Duchess de Châteauroux and the natural inclination of that prince to be influenced by his ministers and courtiers, declared to them that he opposed, in the name of the king, their retreat and that if they wished to remain and brave the orders extorted in a moment of weakness, he took upon himself that all should be well. The imperious prelate despatched orders to the parish. "Let our sacred tabernacles be closed," he said, "so that the disgrace shall be more evident, and let the king be obeyed." The favorites retired, their eyes cast down and hardly daring to look about them.

Fitz-James, not yet satisfied, declared that the king could receive the sacraments only after their departure from the city. "The laws of the church and of the sacred canon," he said to the king, "forbid us to administer unction while the concubine is still in the city. I beseech your majesty to give urgent orders for her departure; for there is no time to be lost; your majesty will soon die.

The king, terrified at the name of *concubine*, granted all that they wanted, and the orders were so roughly and publicly executed that the people of Metz were stirred up against them. D'Argenson stared at Mme. de Châteauroux and made a motion of haughtiness and disdain. They could not even find in the stables of the king an official who would procure them a carriage to shelter them from the wrath of the people, after having reigned like sovereigns in every castle. Only the Marshal of Belle-Isle, fearing they might be stoned to death and recalling the services that the favorite sisters of the king had rendered him, procured them a carriage. They entered it in haste and lowered the blinds to avoid the fury of the people. They were accompanied by the ladies of Belle-Fonds, Roure and of Rubemtre, and were driven to a country house within a few leagues of Metz; the proprietors of which, fearing the populace, hardly dared to let them enter.

The two ladies gone, Fitz-James allowed the sacrament to be administered to the king. The prince was so eager, and dreaded the devil so much, that he said to Fitz-James: "Sir, I received my first communion twenty-two years ago; I desire to receive a good one now and let it be the last."

After having received viaticum they heard him say in a loud tone: "Oh! how unworthy have I been until to-day of royalty!" Louis XIV., his predecessor, Louis XIII., all the kings of France, had died, struck with remorse at having reigned like despots.

The following words were also preserved: "How great is the responsibility of a king who appears before God!" Another time he exclaimed: "Oh! how terrible this passage is!"

Bouillon liked the king and was in distress. "Have courage, Bouillon," said the sick king, "I am still alive."

Again they heard the king say: "It is not permitted us to wish for death; but, if I had anything to ask from God, it would be that he give to this kingdom a better administrator than I have been."

But the triumph of the princes and of the Bishop of Soissons was not quite complete. The latter took advantage of the last moments of the monarch to discredit forever the two fugitive sisters; they told Louis that Mme. de Châteauroux must be deprived of the superintendence of the house of the dauphine. The king granted the request, and the Bishop of Soissons published the new orders; and as the Duke de Richelieu, in despair, was still boasting that when the storm was over the two women would return triumphant, if the king could be freed for a moment from those who surrounded him, he received an order to quit the kingdom, and went to Basle. Finally the bishops took advantage again of the extreme unction to obtain orders that the favorites should be sent fifty leagues away from court, and that the king should make his confession public, to atone for his wickedness. D'Argenson prepared the sealed letters but for his own benefit he kept them, awaiting either the death or recovery of the king.

Soon the necessary articles for administering extreme. unction were brought, and the Bishop of Soissons prepared to display them under the eyes of the monarch. The dying king and the attendants were so frightened and disturbed that the valets, moved at the thought that "their master was going to be killed," to use their expression, said in the chamber, loud enough to be heard by the king: "Our master will now give his kingdom to Monsieur de Fitz-James, if he asks it, in exchange for his salvation." The latter hastened to benefit by the fears of the king, not to secure his kingdom, but to degrade him and make him kneel at his feet. Before applying the consecrated oils, he pronounced these words, preserved by a silent observer.

"Messieurs, the royal princes, and you, nobles of the kingdom, the king begs us, Monseigneur the Bishop of Metz and me, to make known to you his sincere repentance for the scandal which he made in his kingdom by living as he did with Mme. de Châteauroux. He asks God to remit his sins. He has learned that she is only three leagues from here, and commands her not to approach the court within fifty leagues, and his majesty deprives her of her function in the household of the dauphine." . . . . "and to her sister also," added the dying man, raising his head a little, after having approved by signs each phrase of his first chaplain. The officers of the crown were then masters of the field of battle. The dissensions between the nobles and the favorites were at an end.

In the meanwhile, the sickness increased, critical symptoms appeared, and death seemed imminent. On the 15th, at six o'clock in the morning, the princes were summoned to hear the last prayers for the dying, and from six o'clock until noon the king was in agony. D'Argenson had all his papers packed, and the Duke of Chartres had his conveyance ready to repair to the army of the Rhine. The physicians had withdrawn and the king was abandoned to the care of empyrics. One of them made him swallow a very strong emetic, and from that time he gradually recovered.

To please the people and persuade him of the conversion of the king the gallery of communication had been torn down while the two favorites were escaping in great haste and fear. The wife of a counselor, mistaken for one of them, was insulted publicly. They were scoffed at and ridiculed in the course of their journey, especially at Ferte-Sous-Jouarre, where they were recognized. The people attempted to destroy their carriage, but were prevented by an official of the country who checked the populace and took the women under his protection. The people, the avowed enemies of all favorites, were under the impression that the latter alone were responsible for the king's illness. They attributed to them the excess of debauchery which he had practiced. After many such outrages they reached Paris, where they awaited the course of events.

Doctor du Moulin, whom the king had anxiously expected, arrived from Paris, and announced to the sick man the beginning of a sure convalescence; wonderful evacuations hastened it, and on the 17th the king became convinced that he was not going to die.

The queen, who heard the news of his illness on the

19th in the evening, received a daily despatch from La Purionie and a letter from d'Argenson. She dared neither to stay or go to him, and, in great distress, threw herself on the floor, and beseeched God to take her life and spare that of her husband. Instead of rejoicing at the dismissal of the favorite, she was grieved when she heard of it, and she immediately went and wept before the holy sacrament, surrounded by the dauphine and her children. She was so nervous that when a door was opened it startled her. Having received a message permitting her to proceed as far as Lunéville and the dauphine and madame as far as Châlons, she wished to leave instantly and travel post haste, with Mme. de Luines, Mme. de Villars and Mme. de Boufflers in the first coach, and, in another carriage, Mme. de Fleury, Mme. de Saint-Florentin, Mme. de Montauban and Mme. d'Ntin. Madame de Flavacourt, who was in Paris, came to beseech the queen to allow her to go. She went, accompanied by several ladies, who overlooked the disgrace of her two sisters on account of her own irreproachable conduct. So, in the very hour when the two favorites were being expelled from the court, the queen was accompanied by their sister Mme. de Flavacourt.

Having reached Soissons without stopping and receiving a message from d'Argenson to hurry on, she accelerated her journey and flew to the king. He was asleep at her arrival, and he said to her on awakening: "Madame, I implore your pardon for the scandal which I have brought to you, for the sorrows and the grief of which I have been the cause. Do you forgive me, Madame?" He repeated this to her three times. The queen, bursting into tears, could not answer, but pressing him to her bosom she held him during a whole hour. The king's confessor was a witness of that reconciliation, and the next day he sent for Madame de Villars, to learn from her personally if the queen had forgiven him his past infidelities, so great were the efforts of the courtiers to persuade him that she hated him. Madame de Flavacourt saw the king only on the 7th of September. The queen feared that the mention of her name would recall bitter memories, but, after the illness, Madame de Flavacourt was with the king as much as the others. It was known that she was disliked by her sisters, and that the king, who had solicited her, had been refused.

While the queen was with her husband, the dauphin and mesdames had received the order to proceed as far as Verdun and there to stop. In spite of this order, Châtillon, who had resolved in Versailles to accompany the dauphin to the dying king, pursued his way, and Madame de Tallard thought it also her duty to make the princesses advance as they were distressed at being so distant from their father, especially madame, who nevertheless found some consolation in knowing that her father was absolved. D'Argenson, who had sent orders, told Châtillon, that he was greatly astonished at seeing him, after the precise orders from the king to stop at Châlons. Belle-Isle, holding him by his sleeve, drew him aside, and told him that there might be some danger to the dauphin in exposing him to a visit, and that it might increase the danger of the king, who would be affected and moved at the sight of his son.

The doctors being consulted decided that the dauphin being much wearied and a little feverish on account of the long journey, it was not wise for him to see his father; but Châtillon, contrary to this advice, persisted in his own opinion and presented the dauphin to the king, who received him coldly. Governor Châtillon was disconcerted and asked forgiveness of the king for the liberty assumed; the prince made no answer. He was persuaded that the ambition to reign was already implanted in his son, and kept, from that moment a perpetual remembrance of his disobedience.

Louis who had entirely recovered by the first of September then relapsed into his former melancholy. He became more gloomy every day and reviewed over and over in his mind the scenes of his illness. The Duke de Richelieu, benefitting by this and desiring to re-enter the court, prepared the way by letters to Cardinal de Tencin and Marshal de Noailles, who answered him that he was still in the good graces of Louis. This answer emboldened the duke; he endeavored to resume his old standing with the king, who had already decided to join the army. Richelieu, to incite him against his enemies, told him in detail the incidents of his illness, and how Fitz-James, Bouillon, the princes and the whole group who had intrigued against Madame de Châteauroux, had played their parts. Each of them was portrayed in colors so true that the king blushed with shame at his own conduct during his illness. Richelieu persuaded him that it was important to recall all those whom he had disgraced and to discharge the actors in such a farce. From this moment the prince's mind was altered. The queen was no more welcomed with the same affection; the king addressed her very coldly, and on the eve of his departure for Strasburg, the queen having asked him in her usual tone of embarrassment what she should do, adding very affectionately that she hoped his majesty would allow her to accompany him to Strasburg: "It is not worth while," responded the king very coldly, refusing to give any further explanation. In the meanwhile a few favorites, whom the sacraments, the thunders of Fitz-James and the canon of the church, confirmed by sealed letters from d'Argenson, had alarmed and dispersed, again approached the court. Their appearance near the convalescent monarch confirmed the prophecies of Richelieu, who had predicted that the prince would soon resume his former life, that he would abandon his wife as formerly, and that he would even recall Madame de Châteauroux. The queen, forsaken and in tears, went to Lunéville. The Duke of Penthièvre was detained by an attack of smallpox. Madame the Duchess de Chartres and Madame the Princess de Conti declared that they would go to war and would even enter the trenches before Fribourg. Madame de Modène and Mademoiselle went to Strasburg and the king already began to waver between debauchery and devotion. Having discontinued his prayers at the beginning of the campaign and having renewed them after his recovery he now discontinued them entirely and wished neither to recite nor to hear them. Sometimes he displayed a suppressed fury against Fitz-James, Father Prusseau, and everything which recalled the scenes of his illness. After this first resentment he assumed a more peaceful expression but was always splenetic. Passing through Lunéville on his way to Strasburg, he experienced at the court of the King of Poland a profound melancholy, from which nothing could arouse him. The prettiest ladies, seeing the Duchess of Châteauroux disgraced and the place vacant which was coveted by all the fair sex, vied with each other in vain efforts to please the king, who smiled, it is true, but with no display of amiability. His heart was still attached to Madame de Châteauroux; he constantly saw his old love before him, and left without bidding good-bye to the Queen of Poland, wholly preoccupied. On his way he remembered that he had been discourteous, and sent, through a courtier, for news from the King of Poland; but still he forgot to inquire for the health of his wife. Again, recalling that forgetfulness, he wrote them flattering and amiable letters to atone for his oversight, and these letters revealed a very disturbed mind.

Having reached Saverne, he received from Madame de Châteauroux a love-letter and a cockade, and from this moment his passion was so evident that every one said that Madame de Châteauroux would soon return to the court, as the king was burning with love for her. They noticed at the siege of Fribourg, that the king desired less to conquer the place than to see again his former mistress; but the Duke de Richelieu had instructed her not to return to the court without great sureties, and without avenging herself on account of the ignominies which she had endured at Metz.

The king, in the meanwhile, learned from Madrid, through Vauréal, his ambassador, that Chatillon, seeing Madame de Châteauroux disgraced, had written libellous letters regarding the reputation of his mistress. Immediately he signed against him and the Duchess of Chatillon a sealed letter, which however was not yet sent, as he wished to show the favor to Madame de Châteauroux personally.

By this disgrace the king satisfied his personal resentment against the devout Chatillon, who was bringing up the dauphin in an invincible antipathy against the scandalous life led by the king with Madame de Châteauroux, which was still to be continued. For that reason he commanded the officers intrusted with the education of his son to account to him alone concerning it. The disgrace of the duke was therefore assured, whatever decision Madame de Châteauroux should make.

On the first of November the king compelled the city of Fribourg to capitulate and signed the capitulation. Weary of the siege, he left to his generals the duty of entering the castle, and left for Paris on the 8th of November, to make a triumphant entrance, and (let us confess it) to enjoy the homage of the people and to recover the esteem of Madame la Duchess de Châteauroux.

When the king had exiled any one he very seldom forgave him. In 1745, the Duke of Chatillon received permission to return within six leagues of Paris. The dauphin, his first valet, Binet and Boyer negotiated the return, Maurepas and d'Argenson desired it, and engaged the prelate to inform the king, under pretext of necessary remedies for the uncertain health of Chatillon. The king permitted the duke to come to Leuville, whose lord was a relative and friend of Chatillon, to recover. In 1754 this courtier was dying, and still disgraced; he had recourse to Madame de Pompadour and with the consent of his wife, he caused her, through the Baron of Montmorency, to represent to the king the deep sorrow which he felt in dying disgraced. The favorite spoke of it several times to the king who was inexorable; finally she secured permission to inform Madame de Chatillon that the king was willing to forgive the past and grant henceforth his friendship to the family.

CHAPTER LXII.

Sentiments of the Parisians and of the French in general towards Louis XV.—How they receive him when he returned to the capital.—Madame de Châteauroux mixes with the crowd to have a look at the king.—She describes to the Duke de Richelieu the sensation she felt.—She is insulted.

THE French people are not so fond of their kings as one usually thinks. They had shown a great deal of resentment against a hard and long reign, at the death of Louis XIV. The governmental system declining, they made the regent feel that the nation should not be the plaything of the prince; and Louis XV. knew very well that the licentious life he was leading at the Château de Choisy had aroused public contempt.

His sickness at Metz did not change the feelings of the nation; but since 1741, having suffered on account of the inexperience of our generals, France was saved from a painful situation and a state of fear and uneasiness, since the king by his presence had renewed the courage of our troops.

The retreat of Belle-Isle had discouraged them. Maillebois, who came to his relief had not even been able to join him. Ségur who had held Upper-Austria had shamefully evacuated it. Broglie had fled from Bavaria, without striking a blow. The emperor, who owed us his election, after loosing his stakes, had become the laughing stock of the empire and of all Europe. The garrison of Egra, the last stronghold we held in Bohemia, had been taken. Noailles who had planned a great coup had not been successful in the battle of Dettingen where George I. escaped. For two years, we had been retreating everywhere, and Menzel, the guerilla leader, had come to our very frontiers, threatening, at the head of his Hussars, to come to Paris, to carry away our treasures, and to cut off our ears. The people, whose only protection was their defeated troops, could not feel strong like a nation in arms. General anxiety prevailed throughout the capital.

The presence of the king, reviving in the army the old bravery of the French, who, for the time, had been disheartened, reassured the hearts in all the kingdom and especially in the capital. The army seemed a body of heroes, and the king, who stormed several places in person, made everybody forget the roué of Choisy and figured only as the "deliverer of the French." It was said everywhere that if he were sick it was only because he worried about our defense. The illness of the king, like the news of some great calamity, struck terror to the hearts of the French people. Alarmed, they gathered around the post houses and urged the clerks to give them news about the king. Any man on horseback that looked like a courier was stopped, and if he had good news people vied with each other to entertain him. The churches were frequented, night and day, and that of the patroness of Paris, a saint who was almighty in the eyes of the people, never was empty. Whosoever had ten sous brought them to the sexton to say mass for the recovery of the king: his income grew thus an hundredfold. The king was called the "Well-Beloved," and this name stuck to him.

When, after his recovery, the king showed himself to the Parisians, the enthusiasm ran high again. The triumphal processions of the victorious emperors into the capital of the world did not manifest anything like the rapture of the people who rejoiced over their king. The trees bent beneath the burden of spectators, the roofs seemed covered with them. The state carriages were taken out. Splendid parade horses, with heads erect, seemed to realize what they were drawing. All the royal pomp was displayed before the eyes of the affectionate people, who wept for joy and were enraptured by such a sight. They threw silver coins up into the air, and no one picked them up; the sight of a handsome king, of a victorious king, of the deliverer of France was more attractive than gold. The people feasted their eyes on the king, who, in his thirty-fifth year, had recovered from his illness and had again become beautiful as Apollo. The slow and majestic movement of the horses gave all an opportunity to view him. All felt happy to have him back at last.

To obtain a glimpse of the "Well-Beloved," and enjoy his triumph, Madame de Châteauroux left her residence like other people. The king had not yet answered her last importunities. She wrote, meanwhile, passionately and ardently to Richelieu who was at Montpellier. She said: "He came to Paris; and I am not able to describe to you the rapture of the good Parisians. However unjustly they treat me, I cannot help loving them for their love of the king. They have given him the surname 'Well-Beloved,' and this surname obliterates all the wrong they have done me. My excitement and agitation cannot be described. I did not dare to show myself. They are so cruel to me that every step I might take would have seemed a crime. Besides, I have no longer any hope, and instead of requesting the banishment of certain people as the condition of my return I feel so weak that I would yield to any order of the master. . . . But do you think he loves me still? No, he does not; you make me understand quite well that I have not to count on his return. Perhaps, he thinks that he has too many wrongs to redress, and perhaps this keeps him away. Ah! He does not know that they are all forgotten. . . . I could not help going to see him. Though I was doomed to reserve and suffering, while everybody gave way to joy, I wanted at least to enjoy the show, and dressing in such a manner that I could not be recognized, attended his procession with Miss Hébers.

"I saw him! He looked happy and affectionate; he is capable of tender feeling! I looked at him for a long while, and fancy how far imagination may carry one, I believed he fixed his eyes upon me and endeavored to recognize me. His carriage moved so slowly that I had time to study him closely for a good while. I cannot express to you what passed through my soul. I stood closely pressed, in the crowd, and I blamed myself sometimes for the step I had taken for the sake of the man who treated me so inhumanly; but enticed by the applause given to him, by the cheers to which frenzy carried all spectators, I had no longer strength enough to control myself. One voice, however, rang near me, reminding me of my distress by mocking me."

CHAPTER LXIII.

His triumphal reception over, the king visits the Duchesse de Châteauroux.—She insists upon the dismissal of Maurepas.—The king gives his reason for keeping him in the ministry.—She requests that the princes of the blood be punished.—Answer of the king who tries to appease the duchesse.—She asks that the high officials of the crown be banished from the court and the king gives in.—Lettres-de-cachet to please Mme. de Châteauroux.

THE night of November 14th, the king stealthily left the Tuileries, crossed the Pont-Royal, and disguising himself, called on the Duchesse de Châteauroux, who was living in the Rue du Bac, near the convent of the Jacobins. He wanted to learn for himself, without a mediator, under what conditions she would come back to court, and accept excuses for all that happened at Metz during his illness. As long as Madame de Châteauroux was not sure of the king's favor she would have asked to be reinstalled without insisting upon any conditions; but as he made her overtures, she had the discretion, natural to her sex, not to receive him too assiduously. She told him she was quite satisfied not to have been doomed to rot in a prison, she was contented to have her personal liberty and the pleasures of private life; and that, if she should come back to court, it would cost France too many heads. Upon this, the king, who was not at all bloodthirsty, stopped her, saying she ought to forget all and not talk any more about the scandalous scenes at Metz, but return to Versailles that very night, to occupy her former apartments, and to take up again all her duties at court. Madame de Châteauroux expressed a wish that M. and Madame de Maurepas be banished from court. The king told her Maurepas was necessary to him and without him he would never feel inclined to work, while now he did more work with him in half an hour than with the other ministers in a whole day. Madame de Châteauroux asked then that he, at least, should be humiliated in order to check his haughtiness toward her, and the king answered that she should herself suggest the forfeit and that he would force Maurepas to submit to it.

Madame de Châteauroux, still unsatisfied, then tried to attack the princes of the blood, adding, that they ought to be removed from court. The king admitted that they deserved this, but he said that they had been punished by being kept out of his apartments during his illness, and the punishment would be too severe if they had also to go into exile. Then the duchesse asked that the Duke de Chatillon, who encouraged the hostile feelings of the dauphin toward her, the Duke de Bouillon, La Rochefoucauld, Balleroy, Father Prusseau, and Fitz-James, be exiled. "Oh, as for them," replied the king, "I leave them to you. The matter with Chatillon has been settled." He promised also to send away the Bishop of Soissons, but to do so without creating a sensation, for he sided with the Jansenists, an ecclesiastical party which the political situation at that time did not warrant his neglecting. He said, also, he would punish

Prusseau without dismissing him ; but he sacrificed the others, and on that very day he signed *lettres-de-cachet* against the Dukes de La Rochefoucauld and De Bouillon, and sent a courier to Montpellier to inform the Duke de Richelieu of the result of his interview with her.

On the 10th of November, between eight and nine o'clock in the morning, La Luzerne, brigadier-general of the life-guards, received from Maurepas an order to notify Chatillon that he had fallen into disgrace, and hand him a *lettre-de-cachet*, dated October 17th, which contained an order for him to retire to his estates. La Luzerne was exceedingly loath to act as the instrument of the royal displeasure against his intimate friend; but Chatillon himself encouraged him to do his duty, only asking him if he might see the queen and the dauphin. La Luzerne answered him that he had orders to refuse him that privilege and to see him and his wife into their carriage. Maurepas came to tell them it was the king's will that they go before he returned to Paris. Maurepas had held the order of the king without showing it, and received notice to serve it the evening before La Luzerne notified Chatillon, while, on the other hand, the king had sent word to all the ladies and also to Madame de Chatillon to be ready to depart, on November 25th, in order to meet the dauphine; and the order which the king had given was dated October 16th. The Duchess de Chatillon, for whom the order was intended, came out of the apartments of the queen, and Her Majesty asked the duke, whom she saw at the door of the apartments, to offer his arm to Madame de Chatillon and see her to her carriage. At the foot of the staircase, the Count de La Luzerne delivered his message. She apparently knew about it from the conversation which she had just held with the queen; for it was noticed that they did not say a word to each other while going from the apartment down to the carriage.

It was said that the journey of the dauphin to Metz was the only cause of his disgrace, and that he owed it to disobedience of the king; but the conduct of Madame de Chatillon hastened the catastrophe. The duke had gotten into trouble in this way: He left Versailles with the dauphin, the 15th of August, without being ordered to do so; and he exposed him to an extraordinary fatigue. Having arrived at Châlons, he wanted to go on in spite of the order to stop there. To make it still worse, he went to Metz, accompanied by only one guard, and installed himself with the dauphin in the apartments which Madame de Châteauroux had occupied. There, Belle-Isle and d'Argenson waited on the dauphin. The duke was accused of having told the young prince not to worry because the king would not die.

The king had forgotten this conduct but a letter which Madame de Chatillon wrote to the Queen of Spain greatly wounded him. She had sent word to Madrid about what had occurred at Metz concerning Madame de Châteauroux and Madame de Lauraguais. She had congratulated Her Catholic Majesty, saying there would be no more bad examples set at the court and these ladies would not be able to set them to the dauphine, to whose person they would have been attached by their duties. The Queen of Spain spoke about the letter to Vauréal, the French ambassador, and he informed Louis XV. The king, not suspecting anybody else, sent for the Spanish ambassador and told him he wondered why he should have informed his court of the affairs of the king's household. Montijo protested, saying he had written nothing of which his majesty might complain and that the interests of the courts coincided perfectly; he offered to show his despatches to his majesty and to write them in future under his eyes and in his cabinet if his majesty deemed it necessary. The king, believing his words, then ordered the acting minister of foreign affairs to have our ambassador in Spain find out where this information had originated. Montijo, on his part, was anxious to get the proof of his innocence. The Queen of Spain was urged from all sides and Vauréal gave her no peace till she told all. She feared lest her ambassador should be compromised and revealed the secret of Madame de Chatillon's letter. The king then signed the order banishing the wife and the husband, before the siege of Fribourg was over, but she did not receive the communication until November 10th.

Bouillon and La Rochefoucauld went to their estates, the one to Rocheguyon, the other to Navarre. It was not a *lettre-de-cachet* which sent them into exile but a not unfriendly letter of the king advised them to depart and a second letter, received after their arrival, ordering them to stay there. Maurepas, La Rochefoucauld's friend, had secured milder terms for him; the king wrote about it in his letter to Maurepas as follows: "You will give

M. de la Rochefoucauld to understand that I am very much dissatisfied with his conduct and that he is to remain at La Rocheguyon until furthur notice. If, however, business requires his presence in Paris he must ask my permission to go. He may go back and forth between La Rocheguyon and Liancourt. Tell him also to refrain from scurrilous talk which tends to complicate matters."

The Duke de Bouillon was also exiled, not to his estates in Navarre, as La Rochefoucauld had been sent to La Rocheguyon, but to the Duchy d'Albert, an old ruined castle which had not been inhabited for two hundred years and which had scarcely a roof or a door. Madame de Lesdiguières, who had been kind to Mme. de Châteauroux in her childhood and who had brought up and sheltered Mme. de Lauraguais, called on Mme. de Châteauroux, and said frankly that it was a shame for the king to exile one of his high officials for the sake of the Duke de Richelieu and a mistress, since the Duke de Bouillon had only performed the duty of his office at Metz. "I shall never see you again," she said to her, "if that *lettre-de-cachet* is delivered." Having thus spoken, she turned from her. Upon this, Mme. de Châteauroux asked that the punishment be modified.

CHAPTER LXIV.

Outcome of the affairs between the favorite and Father Prusseau.—The king plays with his confessor, and leaves him in doubt as to whether he will be sent away from the court or kept there.—For his amusement the king calls the Jesuit Father Kell to the court.—He spreads the rumor that Prusseau will be expelled.—Prusseau's policy.—Constancy of his character.—The king pities him and urges him to remain.

As we have seen Mme. de Châteauroux had requested that Prusseau, the confessor of the king, be punished; the king refused her then; it pleased him afterwards, even after the death of Mme. de Châteauroux to keep Prusseau in constant fear lest he should be disgraced. For this purpose, he sent for the superior of the Jesuit novices, in order to hear, it was said, the confession of the dauphine who was soon to arrive in France, but really to place Prusseau in the same situation in which he had placed Mme. de Châteauroux at Metz. It will be remembered that the Jesuit wished to leave the favorite in cruel uncertainty as to whether she would be allowed to remain near the king or have to undergo shameful and public disgrace. It will also be remembered that he persisted in the principles of Jesuitic policy when the favorite implored him to prevent this disgrace and offered to be converted if she were allowed to stay; she even offered to leave the court, but secretly and not abruptly. Prusseau now found himself in the same situation as previously Mme. de Châteauroux had found herself, and when the king saw him thus embarrassed he took pleasure in making believe that he would be obliged to introduce his brother priest to the king, the queen, the dauphin, the dauphine and the whole royal family, and that, after this ceremony, he himself would be expelled. Prusseau, who was a true Jesuit as well as a clever courtier, acted as if he were in full possession of the royal favor; he bore the neglect of the pious members of the court with admirable coolness, even when he became the laughing stock of the frivolous courtiers. Boyer alone remained faithful to him. Prusseau, who was as embarrassed but less passionate than Mme. de Châteauroux facing her disgrace, took him into his confidence. The Theatine and the Jesuit concluded it would be a good thing to ask the king through one of his valets whether he should be allowed to stay or obliged to leave the court, imploring the king not to leave him an longer in this uncertainty, for that would show a lack of consideration due to his confessor. The king who enjoyed the embarrassment of his confessor answered him through his valet that he might go for the next few days, as he had nothing very urgent to tell him, but he should not fail to come back on Friday. Father Prusseau retired with Jesuitic self-control.

On the day appointed, the confessor did not fail to appear in the anteroom, but the king did not seem to notice him. Prusseau inquired through the valet what his orders were, and was answered that the king did not want to talk any business now. Thus he passed the whole day in doubt whether he should be sent away or not. Louis XV., who silently noticed this painful situation, at last had pity on Prusseau and did not order him to go away. Of this he informed him through his valet; and Prusseau, cool as ever, bore the assurance of the royal grace with the same equanimity with which he had faced the storm that threatened him.

Thus ended the last intrigue of the royal confessors at the French Court. In the times of ignorance they made of our kings instruments of ecclesiastical ambitions; under weak kings they were the instruments of the prime ministers; under pious kings they debased royalty by monkish and superstitious practices; during the dotage of Louis XIV. they made disorder in the church of France; and Le Tellier went so far as to persuade that king that his adultery, his devastations in the Palatinate, and all his sins would be forgiven if he exterminated protestantism in France and favored the Bull Unigenitus.

The Jesuits, who saw that the reign of the confessional was declining before the spirit of liberty, had for some time sent confessors of discreet character to the kings. Delinièves and Prusseau, who lived during the decline of the sacerdotal reign, acted with discretion, and Prusseau, who was at Metz a passive instrument, had never been a motive power. Though generally inoffensive, he, however, acted there in one of the last intrigues brought about by the royal confessors. This intrigue only served to amuse Louis XV. and his mistresses. Under Mme. de Pompadour, Jesuitism reigned again for a while but the king was no longer amused by it; he gave his consent to the abolition of the whole order. After this the office of confessor to the king was almost always given to some poor country curate, supposed to be blind, deaf and dumb; and thus ended in France the power of the confessional, which ever since the beginning of the monarchy had influenced and at times even directed political affairs. It would be a great mistake if our kings, after the establishment of the constitution, should recall the confessor and concede any influence to him. The expulsion of the Stuarts which they owed to their Jesuitism, and the debasement of Louis XIV. who was governed at the end of his reign by Father Le Tellier are two great lessons for kings. The French people are no longer to be ruled by invisible powers, and history should teach all monarchs that in the great struggle of the nations to regain their liberty, religion proves powerless if it dares to preach submission, through the mouth of priests, in the name of God.

CHAPTER LXV.

Other parties disgraced on account of Mme. de Châteauroux.—Balloroy, former governor of the Duke de Chartres and one of the heads of the court, intrigues in the anteroom, though ill, is still exiled.—Character of Balleroy.—The disgrace of Fitz-James, Bishop of Soissons, is mitigated.—Maurepas is humiliated before Mme. de Châteauroux, who is sick in bed.—Account of her illness.—The king has mass said for the recovery of his mistress.—Symptoms previous to her death.—She is waited on by Mme. de Modène and visited by Mme. de Flavacourt.—She dies in the arms of Mme. de Mailly.—The king is grieved.—Richelieu's situation at Montpellier, where he has his estates.—Story about the portfolio of Mme. de Châteauroux.

BALLEROY'S turn soon came. He was a Norman nobleman, whose principles were as true as they were inflexible and honest. Faithful like a Jansenist, attached to the Bishop of Soissons, former governor of the Duke de Chartres, enlightened, courageous and frank, he had used his talents to direct the theological part of the plot that was played in the anteroom of the dying king, and had composed those thrilling orations which Fitz-James delivered before the king was admitted to the communion and the last unction. It was he who had incited the Duke de Chartres, his pupil, to show his resentment when the chamber of the king was closed against him. Therefore, Balleroy was exiled and lost the good grace of the king.

The Duke de La Rochefoucauld, as relentless in his exile as he had been in the anteroom of Louis XV., refused, up to his death, all the overtures of Louis, who wanted him to take up again the duties of his position. The king praised in vain the new clothes he wore; for the duke, though away from the court, fulfilled the duties of his office; but in his seclusion he could not forget that his contempt for prostitution had been the laudable cause of his disgrace. It pleased Louis when out hunting on a rainy day, to approach his castle and go half of the way in order to induce him to come to a friendly meeting. The duke did not go the other half and did not leave his castle.

The disgrace of Fitz-James closely followed upon that of his courtiers; he was exiled into his diocese, not by a *lettre-de-cachet*, but by word. Maurepas, who softened all rigorous orders, assured the king that a word would make him obey. Fitz-James, on account of this leniency, believed that he might venture to beg permission to return to the court for the wedding ceremony of the dauphine. He was, however, notified that his disgrace was serious, and that it did not differ from that of others except in the form in which the king had expressed it. Though a faithful and unyielding Jansenist, he made new attempts in 1748; but the king sent him word to cease troubling him and to resign his office as grand almoner. Fitz-James paid dearly for his relentlessness; being a descendant of the Stuarts, he had the promise of the cardinalate which the pretender was willing to secure for him by his nomination. But France, Spain and Austria have the right to refuse their consent to the appointment of their subjects; and Louis XV. declared he would not give his. Fitz-James revenged himself by persistently speaking to the king on all occasions of the canons and the anathemas of the church against adulterous kings. Every time that the king visited Compiègne in the diocese of Soissons, a place he liked much, he found on his dressing table a letter from the Bishop of Soissons, written more or less in the following terms :—

" Sire, the kings are never as great or praiseworthy, as when they bow down before the King of kings, and listen to the words of Jesus Christ which are brought to you by His ministers to whom He has given the authority to address you in His name. Remember, Sire, that when you were about to give an account of your reign to the great Lord of Hosts you humiliated yourself before the Supreme Being, you confessed to Him your shortcomings in the presence of the peers of the realm, and you promised to give us a better example; you called us to witness this beautiful act of your reign; and you were never greater nor more venerable in our eyes than when we saw you reconciled to your God. Now, since you took me to witness your public confession, I shall remind your majesty of that day of repentance, of pardon, and of mercy as long as I live. What will become of you, Sire, you who are religious and magnanimous, after your having publicly violated your solemn promises. God will refuse you, when your last hour really comes, that mercy which He once granted? " etc., etc.

The king was always moved, but his mistress came and tore or burned the letter; or the Duke de Richelieu, who took things whenever he could, added it to his historical papers and took care to disperse the sinister thoughts which these letters gave to the king; and mistresses and favorites united to prevent the inexorable prelate from being created cardinal.

Fitz-James having been punished, Maurepas' turn came. To satisfy Madame de Châteauroux, the king called his minister when he left the state council, gave him his instructions with a loud voice, and told him to go to Mme. the Duchess de Châteauroux, in order to apologize and to call her back to Versailles. Maurepas, who was yielding and submissive, asked the king's permission to write under his eyes the speech which he was to make. "There it is all written out," said the king, handing him the formula which Richelieu had prepared for Mme. de Châteauroux. When Maurepas presented himself at the residence of the duchess, the maid, who had instructions, told him that she was not at home. Maurepas then wanted to see Mme. de Lauraguais, and he received the same answer. He then said he came from the king, and he was allowed to enter.

Maurepas found her in bed with a cold and fever. The Duke d'Ayen (he lived to 1792) was at her bedside, but retired when he heard a visitor of his rank announced. In the beginning Maurepas was a little confused; soon, however, he was himself again, speaking to Mme. de Châteauroux as follows: "Madame, the king sends me to tell you that he has not the least knowledge of what happened concerning you during his illness at Metz. He has always had for you the same esteem and consideration. He asks you and Mme. de Lauraguais to come back to the court and to take up again your duties." Mme. de Châteauroux answered Maurepas thus: "I have always been convinced, sir, that the king had nothing to do with what happened to me. Thus, I have never ceased to feel for his majesty the same respect and devotion. I am sorry not to be able to go and thank the king to-morrow, but I shall go next Saturday, when I shall be well again."

Maurepas tried to make his excuses to Mme. de Châteauroux, and entered into details about misrepresentations concerning him. In this way he tried to explain his embarrassment when he first entered. Then, respectfully approaching the duchess, who, sitting in her bed, enjoyed all the compliments, Maurepas went so far as to beg to kiss her hand. Mme. de Châteauroux held it out to him, and said: "That is very cheap, and does not commit you to much."

This whole farce had been prepared by the Duke de Richelieu. Mme. de Châteauroux had requested it from the king; the king had imposed it upon his minister. But the triumph of the duchess did not last long; she lay on the bed from which she was never to get up again. It is even said that poison shortened her life. Richelieu has affirmed it to the writer of these memoirs, adding that Maurepas had a part in the vile act. But the variety of situations, painful and contradictory, which Mme. de Châteauroux underwent, sufficiently explains her acute illness and her sudden death. To show how the ambitious are chastised and what sufferings were to precede her demise, let us recall to the mind of our readers the different situations of Mme. de Châteauroux.

She had left for Flanders, uneasy as to how she would be received by the king. At her arrival in the camp she could not help but notice both the scandalous talk and the offensive songs directed against her. The exhaustion of the king, resulting from his journey to Metz, the disastrous scene in that city, the illness of the king, the order to leave the court, the new order to go further, the hisses of the mob, the great danger to her life in several tumults called forth by her presence, her joy at his return, the hope soon to enjoy a complete triumph at Versailles ; these different situations, contrary to each other, all of an exciting kind, disturbed her blood, caused a congestion and she had a serious back-set on the very day which she considered the most glorious of her life.

She was delirious for eleven days, having lucid moments now and then. While her mind was wandering she cursed the authors of her illness and said she was poisoned by Maurepas. The Jesuit, father Légand, profited by conscious intervals to confess her. When he left her he went so far as to say that he was delighted, even edified, by the spirit which the duchess showed, and that he had seen few women so ready to die. Languet, the curate of St. Sulpice, administered her the communion ; neither the one nor the other made it a point that she renounce her passion. Mme. de Modène, her ever faithful friend, setting aside rank and etiquette, waited on her day and night. She told her Madame de Flavacourt, her sister, had come to see her.

Mme. de Châteauroux answered her: "Ah! I am sorry that you let her go away. Didn't you think I would be pleased to see her?" Mme. de Modène, who knew of their cool relations, replied: "I am delighted that you feel that way toward her. She is still here but I did not know how to tell you." She made her come in, kissed her and said: "Sister, you kept away; for my part, I always felt the same toward you."

Mme. de Châteauroux showed signs of repentance during her illess, and promised to do penance, but this was never to be. Father Légand, who spoke to her, about various exercises, told her the Virgin would save her, and Mme. de Châteauroux answered: "In all situations of my life I have worn her medal and I have asked her two favors, not to have to die without the sacraments and to let me die on one of her days." These favors were granted her, for she died on Conception Day.

This was the spirit of the time. The king himself, learning of the dangerous illness of the duchess, called on heaven and earth to protect the object of his passion. The first thing he did was to send money to the vestries of the churches at Versailles, in order to have mass said for the recovery of his mistress, and he did not cease sending some every day; this is to say that in order to serve his passions he used the most holy institutions which religion offers to her adherents. And what other idea could the kings have about the Deity, if the poets called them children of the gods and if they are incessantly surrounded, in France, by courtiers who vie with each other to satisfy their vicious appetites! The king sent every day to inquire after the patient. D'Aryen Luxembourg and the Marquis de Gautaud brought news twice a day, while Montmartel, the ever-ready servant of the favorites, sent courtiers four times a day to LeBel, the valet who had charge of the private affairs of the mistresses, in order that the king might hear news at every moment. The duchess was bled nine times during her illness ; at the arms, the feet and the yoke. The remedies did their work. Only her head did not improve. Dreadful pains, delirium, excitement, even convulsions, put her into a miserable state. She would see neither physician nor surgeon. In order that she should receive them she had to be told that the king sent them. With every day she became more fixed in her opinion that she was poisoned. She said it aloud, she mentioned the place and the circumstances. She said that it had been at Rheims in a medicine, (and it is true that she was ill there, and that the court had to stop on her account) but most of the persons who watched her illness asserted that she talked this way only when she was not herself. These rumors spread fast in Paris and Versailles; and when, after her death, the blood vessels were found to be dilated and swollen with blood, and a little inflammation of the lungs was discovered, those who believed her to be poisoned were the more convinced by those doubtful symptoms. Such persons declared that it had been done through perfumes and referred to other poisonings of the same kind.

Mme. de Mailly came to visit her at this time and was granted permission to speak to her through the agency of Mme. de Modène. The meeting was so touching that they could not find a word at first. Mme. de Mailly, who was not afraid of the dreadful contagion of the illness, had the courage to let her die in her arms.

Thus died Marie-Anne de Mailly, widow of Jean-Louis, Marquis de la Tournelle, Lieutenant-Colonel of the Condé regiment, created Duchess de Châteauroux by patent letter of 1743. She was buried beneath the Chapel of St. Michael at St. Sulpice, the 10th of December, one hour before the usual time, because they feared the mob, and because the police demanded this precaution from the curate and ordered the guards to be under arms.

Mme. de Châteauroux had undoubtedly loved in Louis the XV. the powerful prince who could give influence, rank, and fortune ; but her ambition was not unreasonable and did not ask for more than the simpler luxuries of life and a title at the court. What she loved most in Louis XV. was the amiable man whose education had been spoiled by a priest and whom she was anxious to inspire with firmness, dignity, and sentiments worthy of a great monarch. And to succeed, she was willing to use the power which a clever woman has over her lover. She suffered in seeing the king bury himself alive in Choisy, and told him that his rightful place was at the head of his armies. She cost next to nothing to the nation, who owed it to her that the king was awakened from his lethargy and placed at the head of his troops.

Mme. de Mailly had been no expense to the state ; Mme. de Vintimille would not accept anything beyond the simplest necessaries of life; Mme. de Pompadour had an insatiable ambition. The duchess refused with contempt the offers of business people who for a simple privilege offered her millions. In her letters to the Duke de Richelieu, she calls these offers an disgusting rudeness which could never be tolerable to her. Like her sister. Mailly, she proved at the court faithful to the dignity, honesty, and the principles of the house de Mailly, despising baseness and dishonest means to keep herself in the favor of the king, who was the only one whom she loved, after her desertion of the Duke d'Agénois.

The king who deeply felt his isolation, at the illness of Mme. de Châteauroux, went out hunting to divert himself. At his return, the council met, and when he was informed that the state of the duchess was hopeless, he was unable to attend the meeting to the end, and said to his ministers: "Finish the rest without me!" Giving way to his grief, he retired at eight o'clock into La Muette, would not see anybody and gave orders to his ministers not to come there. The Duke d'Ayen, Luxemburg, Gontaut, La Vallier, and the Prince de Soubise failed to console him. The Count de Noailles, Meuse, d'Harcourt and the first equerry, who were at La Muette, succeeded as poorly.

The king, who was stricken by this death and gave way to melancholy, went to the Trianon to mourn with Mme. de Modène, Mme. de Boufflers, and Mme. de Bellefonds. As to the princes, the king did not receive the Dukes de Chartres and Pentlièvre till November 15th, at his levee in the Trianon, where the Duke de Chartres in his quality of a relative of Mme. de Châteauroux, still more in his quality of a courtier who wished to please, asked the king's permission to put on mourning. The dauphin came there the same day and the Prince de Conti on December 19th. One noticed by the eyes of the king that he had shed tears during his conversation with this prince. They conversed, for an hour, about the one they both had loved most fervently. Even the queen herself had courage to ask his permission to see him in order to share his extreme grief. The king sent Le Bel to her with a letter in which he spoke in the beginning as her friend and at the end as her master, telling her authoritatively that he could meet her only at Versailles.

Meanwhile, the Duke de Richelieu, who was on his estates near Montpellier, underwent the most terrible anxiety. He had heard by couriers almost simultaneously of the illness and the death of the duchess, and since he knew that the kings usually sent for the portfolios of their favorites, in order to remove their love letters, he feared Louis would send for her portfolio from which we have gathered part of the facts related in these memoirs and where is found the story of all the intrigues this courtier contrived with Mme. de La Tournelle, the king's mistress, to restore her to him after the scenes at Metz. In his correspondence, Richelieu pictures the character of the king with all his weakness; he speaks to Mme. de Châteauroux of the way in which to subjugate and to master the king. The beginning and the progress of the intrigues are here reported; and if the king read this correspondence (which would interest him as much as that of Mme. de Vintimille of which he took possession when she had breathed her last), he would have to admit that he saw himself in a faithful mirror. Richelieu, whom fear struck like lightning, was for a while quite stunned. He did not believe in God, but such was his terror that he prostrated himself before the Supreme Being, asking him to save this portfolio. We have seen that the king prayed to God and had masses said for the recovery of his dying mistress; Richelieu prayed at Montpellier for the preservation of the king's favor, in great peril through the portfolio of the duchess. If they had been heathen, the king would have prayed to Venus, and Richelieu to Mercury. In France, in 1744, the priests had debased the idea of the Supreme Being in such a way that princes and grandees imagined that there reigned in Heaven deities protective of a mistress, a portfolio, and other shameless and infamous things; in short, deities who listened to the grief of Louis XV., who protected an adulterer, and who complaisantly favored the intrigues of a duke or a peer. The French people who believed in gods of this kind and were used to praying to them in all circumstances of life, gave every year the tenth of their harvest for the maintenance of those priests and their lies. Fortunately for the tranquillity of the duke, the king sent a courier to Montpellier to reassure him, but he did not take part in the embassy to Spain, for the reception of the Infanta engaged to the dauphin; the Duke de Lauraguais (he lived to 1792) was sent in his stead. This nobleman, who had just come from Fribourg, did not know that his wife was restored to her office, that his sister-in-law was again in favor, and that this brilliant commission was destined to him. Living an inoffensive life, without intrigue and without ambition, he always kept the same attitude, and if he ever showed publicly that firmness which is so different from the fickleness of the courtiers of Louis's reign, it was at the foot of the Pyrenees, at the reception of the Infanta, when the Spanish ministers, scrupulously sticking to all due forms, hesitated to hand her over; it was, too, concerning his wife toward whom he observed a firm and consistent conduct; it was, too, with regard to the name and arms of the Brancas. To show that he submitted like any other citizen to the decree of the constituent assembly, at the time of the decomposition of the French monarchy, he took off, in his house, all the old signs of chivalry in his family, and he replaced the arms by the words: "Numquam non Brancas,"(Ever a Brancas). There are in the aristocratic monarchies names and historical genealogies which no decree can destroy.

CHAPTER LXVI.

After the death of Mme. de Châteauroux the king wishes to attach himself to Mme. de Flavacourt.—How the Duke de Richelieu manages this affair and what happens to him.

In spite of all these happenings disagreeable and injurious to the authority and majesty of a king, Louis XV. still wanted to bestow his affections in the Mailly family. He was informed that Mme. de Vintimille, whom he had loved most, had been poisoned; he had just lost the woman for whom he had done most and who had occasioned the scandal at Metz; he had discarded Mme. de Mailly, who had loved him so tenderly.

Of all these sisters who caused him so much unhappiness there remained only the beautiful and virtuous Marquise de Flavacourt. She had resisted him but he wanted to conquer her and charged his ingenious favorite with this mission.

Richelieu visited Mme. de Flavacourt after the death of Mme. de Châteauroux and tempted her with various offers. Would she possess riches? would she be the mistress of the richest monarch of the world? would she have political influence? would she see the potentates send her their ministers to arrange the most important affairs under her supervision? would she elevate her family? would she procure privileges and offices for them? There was not a temptation which the

"Premier-General" could enter upon his charge, without paying a portion of those debts to the tradesmen. Surely, the red book is not burdened with many sums paid to the four sisters.

When Mme. de Mailly had lost the heart of the king, God alone was able to comfort her. She thought to please him by doing penance in a rigorous and exemplary way. Like Mme. de la Valiere whose good qualities and virtues she possessed, she wanted first to renounce the world altogether, for they gave her to understand that she ought to avoid all publicity, all extravagance and try to edify the people whom she had offended by her past life. Impressed by the beauty of a sermon which represented the blessedness of a life with God, she desired to taste the felicity of that small number of truly pious and unworldly souls who wish to please the Supreme Being, not by any of those strange exercises invented in convents which make God a capricious and cruel being who takes pleasure in oriental and fantastic tortures, but by the works of an active and brotherly charity to which she devoted herself without hypocrisy or show. Guided by Father Renaud who practiced true Christianity without fear, she only asked from the king help for the poor whom she visited even in their garrets; she tended their sores and penetrated into the prisons to console them. Her charity was so fervent that one of her relatives, the Marshal de Mailly, honest and virtuous like her, has assured the author of these memoirs that Mme. de Mailly, depriving herself of everything for the sake of the poor, kept sometimes not more than two or three écus

—a bare pittance—for the necessaries of life. Humble and modest, she forgot her former life; one day she was brutally and publicly insulted in the church of St. Roch where she heard some persons whom she had disturbed in taking her place say: "That is much ado for a person like you." Without embarrassment, she answered: "Since you know me so well, perhaps you will pray for me."

The king, religious even in the midst of his voluptuous life, was touched by this story. More than once he wanted to confer a bishopric upon the famous Father Renaud who had guided her. The man, who was as modest as Mme. de Mailly, thanked him. He was a pupil of Massillon, a Provençal like him; in his gentle eloquence, a rival of his master. His features bore a noble simplicity, and the candor of a good soul. By his conduct, by his disinterestedness, his singular reserve in society, his fearlessness in the pulpit against the hypocrites and fanatics of his time, he knew how to attract people. May history give him his due; I have mentioned him for the sake of the triumph of virtue and truth, and for the shame of bad princes and wicked people.

Mme. de Mailly continued her public penance till 1751, which was the year of her death; she appointed her nephew, the son of the king and Mme. de Vintimille, her sole heir. The Prince of Tingri was the executor of her will. It ought to be mentioned that she left him a sum of 30,000 livres, for what—he well knew. It was known that, her debts not having been paid in full des-

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CHAPTER LXVIII.

Second campaign of Louis XV. in 1745.—Siege of Tourney.—Battle of Fontenoy described after the correspondence of the court.—Report of this battle handed to Louis XV. by the Marshal Richelieu.—Tourney capitulates.—Duchailla and Lowendal take Ghent. —Souvré takes Bruges.—Lowendal takes Oudenarde, and the Duke d'Harcourt Dendermonde.—Lowendal takes Ostend.—Capture of Nieuport.—The Marshal Saxe terminates the campaign of 1745, and completes the conquest of Brabant by taking Brussels, its capital, in the middle of the winter.

THE Duke de Richelieu played such a prominent part in the battle of Fontenoy, in 1745, that we cannot forbear to sketch this campaign according to his reports. The successes of the French in the Netherlands, instead of disarming Maria-Theresa, reanimated her courage ; she spent the winter in negotiating treaties, and concluded one with Saxony and Holland. France, on her part, sent the Marshal de Belle-Isle and his brother to Berlin, who were captured with their papers by Hanoverians; this caused great anxiety to the cabinet of Versailles.

On May 5th the king, who knew from the experience of the last campaign how much the troops had been encouraged by his presence, wanted to go to the army in Flanders accompanied by the dauphin. The evening before, he supped in state and took coffee in the apartments of the queen, according to his habit. After fifteen minutes of light conversation, the king, without taking leave of his spouse, went to his own apartments, but did not leave till three o'clock. The foreign ministers followed him and stopped at Cambray.

Signs of discord were plainly manifest in the royal family. The dauphin, his wife, and the queen formed one party; the king and little Mme. d'Etiole, by whom he was already bewitched, formed the other. The dauphin, who came from the Spanish court where strict morals, contrary to the licentiousness of Louis, were observed, could not at all sympathize with the king.

After the departure of the king, Paris got no news from the army till the 12th. The respective positions of the troops pointed to an action. People passed their time at the post house to get the news; there came none. The queen was already alarmed when a page arrived at six o'clock, who brought her two letters, one from the king and the dauphin, who had written in a hurry on the same sheet, and the other from d'Argenson. They both told the same story. They were dated from the battle field of Fontenoy, at half-past two: "The enemies attacked us this morning at five o'clock;" wrote the king to the queen, "they have been well beaten. I am well, and my son also. I have not the time to tell you more about it. I believe it would be well to reassure Paris and Versailles; therefore, I shall send the details as soon as I can." The dauphin had written beneath: "My dear mother, I compliment you with all my heart upon the battle which the king has just won. . . . I had always the honor to accompany him. I shall write you more about it to-night or to-morrow. I conclude in assuring you of my respect and my love." (Signed) LOUIS.

It is from the intimate court correspondence that this report of the battle of Fontenoy is taken. The stories of this battle vary with the reports in the various memoirs, on account of the difficulty of describing scenes which change every moment, and on account of the ever varying picture. Descriptions of this famous battle coincide only in the report of its most significant features, such as the firmness of the famous column of the enemy. One has tried in his report given here to clear up certain facts and disentangle the confusion of events, a chaos, the details of which have not been made out till now.

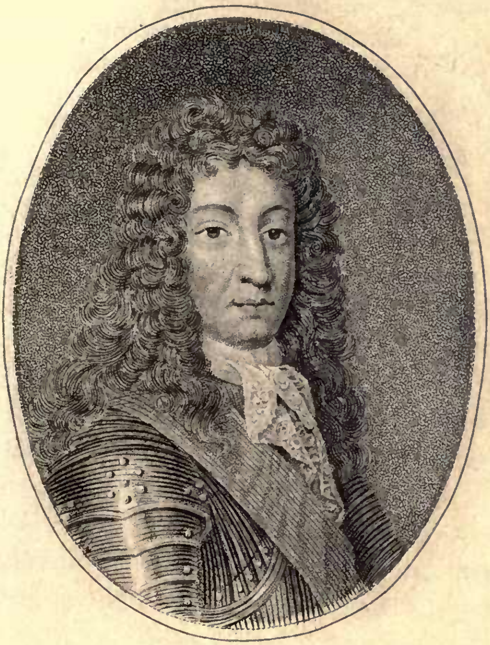
On May 9th, the king learned that the enemy leaving the camp of Morbay marched in three columns against our right flank. The king advanced immediately in order to examine the position which was taken to meet the enemy from whatever side he might come. In the night, from the 9th to the 10th, the Grassin regiment was ordered to advance to keep in touch with the enemy. The next day the king arose at daybreak; followed by his son, he went reconnoitering and noticed the vanguard of three columns moving in the direction of Fontenoy, which stopped at thrice the range of a cannon until night. The Marshal Saxe thought it necessary to form in order of battle. Between the forest of Barry and the river Scheldt, there is a plain half a mile wide and three-quarters of a mile long, where took place the famous battle of Fontenoy, which takes its name from the village lying in the center of the plain.

The first position of the two armies was advantageous for the French; they advanced towards the center of the plain, near the village, having at their right, towards the forest of Fontenoy, the Dutch and the army of the English and Hanoverians, numbering 55,000 men.

On May 11th, when the mist had risen, the Marshal Saxe had the guns directed upon the Dutch cavalry, near Antoing, which made them retreat a little, and crossing our lines, he directed them against the English cavalry which advanced towards Fontenoy. Ever since five o'clock in the morning our artillery had kept up a terrible fire; we had one hundred and twenty pieces of cannon.

This charge, far from startling the English, made them place their cannon at the head of their column; the firing lasted till nine o'clock in the morning. Grammont is slain by a cannon ball. Du Broccard, in order to stop the march of the English into the center of the plain proposes to the general to advance a battery to the front of the Courten regiment; he causes terrible slaughter in the army of the enemy, whose flank he attacks, and obliges him to change his position but he is killed by a cannon ball. Meanwhile, the English and the Dutch drew up in order of battle with admirable coolness; they seemed about to begin the attack; their infantry was protected by their cavalry which marched over the plain; they deployed in front of Fontenoy but were arrested in their advance by the firing from the village. A second Dutch infantry column advanced toward Antoing. The cannonade from this place stopped its march, reinforced by the position of the cavalry which the Count d'Eu commanded.

COUNT GRAMMONT



During the movements on the right of our army, three columns of English and Hanoverian infantry marched straight upon our center; in vain, our artillery mowed down their first ranks; they were refilled immediately. These columns began the battle.

A cavalry column was at their right led by Campbell. The Chevalier d'Apcher, at the head of ours, repulsed and put them in confusion. Campbell had his thigh torn off, and his cavalry disappeared till the time of the retreat when they made their last efforts. But the three columns of infantry, which made, at the same time, greater progress, advanced towards Fontenoy, dispersed our battalions and formed in a square even on three sides. They marched swiftly upon us in order to turn our position, firing furiously from all sides, dispersing us and outflanking Fontenoy. The success of these evolutions pointed toward disaster for us.

A line of infantry formed of the battalions of the king and of Aubeterre, of the Swiss Guards and the French Guards, was in front, fifty paces distant from the English; twenty-nine officers of the guards and other regiments, struck by the first charge, were killed; Colonel Courten met a sudden death. Fourteen officers and two hundred rank and file were seriously wounded, fifty-seven were killed and there were no men to refill the first ranks. The English were still advancing with bold and cool blooded resolution; themselves impenetrable, they repulsed the French and Swiss Guards and beat back the other regiments which we sent against then. The Marshal Saxe ordered some brigades to fortify Fontenoy and outflank from that side the terrible column of the enemy; he sent other divisions of troops to outflank them from the opposite side. The orders were to be executed at the same time in order to oblige the enemy to face the two opposite attacks; but the right flank executed the order with too much ardor and promptitude and the enemy, directing all his forces to this side, put our troops in disorder and without the infantry brigade of the reserve, all would have been lost on this side. Meuse, despatched by the marshal, went to implore the king to go back over the bridge with the dauphin, but the king wanted to stay where he was to watch the outcome. Thus our troops were beaten at the right, when those which the marshal had sent to the left began their attack. The enemy, always victorious, turned to this side and faced a moment our opposite fire. The cannonade lasted for an hour; we made fruitless movements in all directions to divide them; our squadrons seemed to melt in their presence, and the column, slowly advancing, was drawing nearer and nearer to the center of the plain, cutting our troops in two. Three times, the Vaisseaux regiment, commanded by Guerdy, was put in disorder and three times it rallied and defended itself courageously. The Prince de Craon, colonel of the Hainaut regiment, was killed at the head of his men, and Colonel Dillon, at the head of the Irish.

In this critical moment the marshal, rallying once more the infantry, always beaten but never conquered, joined it to the brigade under Clave which presented its front to the enemy; the Normandy and Vaisseaux regiments were also ordered to advance. Béranger and Lord Clare were ordered to attack the right flank of the enemy. The king, not losing courage, rode to the field of battle, accompanied by some noblemen, and rallied the fugitives by his words and his example, while the dauphin implored him in vain to permit him to charge at the head of his bodyguard.

Then the king's bodyguard, the Gendarmes, the Carabineers, commanded by the Duke de Richelieu, make a dash upon the hitherto unbroken center ; four pieces of cannon, well directed, strike it like lightning ; our troups on the right and on the side of Fontenoy approach and attack this division of the English army. The invincible column is shaken, penetrated, divided, and confused ; it flees from the field of action, and abandons its cannon ; several of its regiments are entirely annihilated. Our troops pursue the fugitives to the hedges of Vezon. At last, at half past two, our success is assured.

The Dutch, compared to the English, seemed to have been peaceable spectators of this battle. They were on the right of our army, near the woods of Fontenoy, and our troops who had grown more ardent and audacious after the flight of the English attacked this corps of reserves and caused their precipitate retreat.

This happened on May 11th. On the next day, the Count d'Estrées went to Leuze with a detachment, where he gathered from three thousand to four thousand prisoners. We took, also, twenty-two pieces of cannon left on the field. We tried to ascertain the losses. It was said that the English had lost twelve or fifteen thousand men and we three or four thousand. The Irish captured a flag. The enemy retired to Athe.

The Marshal Richelieu, who always told the story of the battle of Fontenoy with the greatest interest, sent, on March 7th, 1783, a report of his services to Louis XVI. where this battle is described in the following terms: " The evening before the battle, the Marshal Saxe who was dropsical was punctured, but his courage, his self control, his love for his calling, made him conceal his extreme pain, and he went to take command of the army. The enemy had gathered in a big hurry. The king set out on the first notice; and the evening of that day, when he was about to retire he learned that the enemy marched against us and that he would probably attack us on the next day. The king, instead of going to sleep, ordered that the dauphin who had already retired was not to be awakened. His majesty set out immediately and came in time for the battle, which did not take place till the next day, so that the dauphin also reached the place in time. The Marshal Saxe, being in most miserable health, had to depend on subordinate officers who had taken a very bad position; for he had neither the time nor the strength to change matters, or to do what he would have wished if his health had permitted him to choose a position favorable to such a large army. He was close to the enemy, and in the moment that he attacked him, the enemy began to attack the position of the guards and found himself in the midst of our army, while his cavalry could not penetrate so far. They were like us in straits. One could not attack them from any side, it being difficult to turn them and to send each regiment to a place which would afford a combined attack. So, our troops who came in platoons upon this enormous mass of infantry were always repulsed, and appeared likely to be killed one by one. A great number of lieutenant-generals who did not know what to do came to ask the king for new orders and told him there was no means to do any harm to the infantry of the enemy and that they must retreat. At the beginning of the attack, the Duke de Richelieu had asked the king's permission to go and see, from near by, what was going on, in order to give him an account of it. He came to the position which the brigade of the Vaisseaux regiment was occupying, commanded by M. de Guerchi. Since it was already too much discouraged to attack, all by itself, the infantry of the enemy, the Duke de Richelieu joined them and took part in the attack; so, he saw from near by the little effect which it produced; it was repulsed and decimated, M. de Guerchi overthrown and his horse killed. Having examined the position from this side, he went back to report to the king. There was not one among the suit of Louis XV. who did not favor a retreat, seeing the impossibility of a victory with troops that had been frightened like ours. The Duke de Richelieu alone dared to be of a different opinion; he remarked that it would be impossible for our troops to be successful by way of attacking the infantry of the enemy in platoons; he added that he did not doubt that, by cannonading, this column, which was hemmed in and without cavalry, would be put in disorder and our troops, encouraged anew, would attack at once and everywhere, this awkward mass of infantry. He said that, if the infantry of the enemy should not suffer from the terrible effect of the cannonade and be driven away or annihilated, we might withdraw our troops if we should be obliged to do so, and that otherwise we could not do it without the greatest danger. Somebody replied: 'Whence take the cannon?' 'From close by,' replied the Duke de Richelieu. 'I have just seen a battery.' Some one objecting replied that the Marshal de Saxe had forbidden to remove the battery. The Duke de Richelieu said in answer that the marshal had given this order before the situation had developed but that the king was anyhow the superior to the general of the army. Then no more was said, and Richelieu asked his majesty if he would not give the order to remove the cannon of that battery; the king, uneasy, gave his consent, after hesitating some time. Richelieu told an officer of the Touraine regiment, named Ionard, whom he knew, to go and get the cannon as quickly as possible. Ionard obeyed zealously. There was not a cannon shot that failed. Dreadful slaughter was the result of this new kind of attack, and with the first shot the enemies were put in such a great disorder that they did not lose time in retreating. Then they were charged upon from all sides, and we succeeded in driving them completely away, which so encouraged our troops that it was hardly necessary to give orders. All that the enemy could do was to retreat hastily, being attacked on all sides."

The author of these memoirs who gives this description by the hand of Richelieu does not add anything to it. But, after having heard what Richelieu has to say, those that are interested will like to read a report which has been found among his papers. It is dated from the camp at Tourney, May 14th, and is written by the valet of the Count de Saxe.

"There has never been gained a more complete victory than that of Fontenoy, on the 11th inst. The enemy has abandoned his cannon, ammunition and train. We have just brought in two thousand Englishmen and Hanoverians, who were found on roads, in barns, villages, and hamlets. Their loss amounts to at least ten thousand men. Their flight and confusion is dreadful. It is a beautiful day for France, this 11th of May, and a glorious day for his majesty and for the Marshal Saxe who during the battle has been everywhere, giving his orders with admirable coolness. I accompanied him at every move. I wanted to kiss his hands, but he was so gracious as to embrace me. We have still some five or six days' work before us. As there is nothing urgent to do the marshal wants to go slowly to spare his men. The soldiers on guard have behaved worse than usual, which is a shame indeed. We have killed sixty-three officers of the enemy, among whom are three generals, and they have four thousand three hundred wounded. I have seen, myself, on the battle-field some four or five thousand. Beside that, we have captured forty-four pieces of cannon, one hundred and twenty-two wagons of ammunition, and a large quantity of baggage. I do not believe that these proud English will again appear before us in this campaign. I have not time enough to name the exact figure of our losses which amount to less than has been said. This would be too much work for me who have only one hour for writing among the twenty-four of the day. The marshal is tired to-day, having been nine hours on horse-back, sick as he is, on the day of the battle. He just comes from the king, where he has taken his orders. His majesty kissed him on the battle-field ; he came here, the day before yesterday, with the dauphin and the whole court and kissed him.

"This is our glory. This is what we have gained. The enemies attacked first a village, and an entrenchment on our right flank, where were two infantry brigades, and eight pieces of cannon, commanded by M. de Lutteau. The enemy took it, after a dreadful slaughter. We pushed on, without time for breathing, and won it back in a moment. The enemy attacked in front ; the fire and the slaughter were terrible on both sides. Our infantry was repulsed, after a two hours' fight. The first and second line of cavalry were sent to the front and were likewise repulsed, but Louis, who was present, did wonders for a king in rallying his troops, kindly saying to some, 'Onward! courage, my children! Come back, I will put myself at your front ;' and to others he said, whip in hand: 'You are scoundrels to abandon your comrades who are being slaughtered.'

"The enemy advanced steadily and was nearly master of the field. The king, on whose forehead the perspiration stood, and who was as much troubled as the dauphin, said in view of his critical situation: 'My guards shall go to the front,' and he retired farther, because the bullets struck at his feet every moment and passed him sometimes. All seemed lost. We marched upon the enemy and attacked a square of ten or twelve thousand men. At the first and second charge, we could not even break into them. At the third, we shook their lines, but they did not lose one inch of ground. The fire of the enemy was withering us. The king was informed, at this moment, that his guards stood it well, that all would go well, but that we needed more infantry and some cannon. Immediately he came back, full of joy, and sent us what we wanted. We attacked again, the infantry clearing our way. We charged that battalion, sword in hand, and routed it. We pursued them to a forest. Then the soldiers threw up their hats, exclaiming: 'Long live the king!' We rallied the whole army over thousands of dead bodies."

Here ends the report of the valet.

In this battle, the conduct of Castelmoron, a young nobleman of fifteen years, brother of Béthune, the great wolf hunter, who served in the gendarmery, was much admired. During the battle, he noticed that the ensign bearer was dragged away by his horse so that he was carried into the ranks of the enemy; he chose five of his men, tried to recapture the flag in the midst of the hostile troops, and brought it back. He was, however, so modest that he never spoke about it. This gallant act was never rewarded, and Mme. de Castelmoron heard of it only through public talk. Nevertheless, it aroused the jealousy of some great men, and Monteclair took the liberty to call him a child. Castelmoron, in order to prove that he had attained manhood, wanted to measure swords with him. Monteclair killed him quickly, thrusting his sword through his body. The prejudices of the nobility called this crime a duel; history and truth can only call it a murder.

The continuation of the war determined the king to direct the operations of the army towards the Austrian Netherlands. He resolved to lay siege to Tournay, where the war had slackened; but the news of the victory of Fontenoy awakened the courage of our troops, and with that vivacity so characteristic of the French, a salute of one hundred and sixty pieces, the play of all the batteries, a throwing of fifty-five bombs, a general cannonading by the whole army announced to the inhabitants of Tournay a splendid success. This cannonade was repeated three times. The city of Tournay became alarmed by it. The garrison composed of eleven battalions and a regiment of cavalry opened the gates and took refuge in the citadel, where the king attacked and forced them to capitulate nineteen days afterwards. This beginning of the campaign gave courage to the troops.

The city of Tournay having submitted to the king, he formed the project of taking the city of Ghent. He conducted his army upon the Dentre, in order to keep the enemy who did not dare to pass before it in check.

While the Marquis du Chayla and the Count Lowendal lieutenant-generals, directed armies against Ghent, the one by the right, the other by the left of the Scheldt, a body of six thousand of the enemy, which left Alost in order to garrison Ghent, happening to meet the soldiers of the Marquis du Chayla the 9th of the month, were entirely defeated: and on the 11th, after Lowendal had taken the place by storm and facilitated the entrance of the marquis, they forced the garrison to retire into the castle where the seven hundred men were made prisoners of war on the 15th. This success deprived the enemy of all communication with that part of Flanders bordering on the sea, put us in possession of all their principal stores and siege artillery, insured our troops abundant provisions during the remainder of the campaign, and opened to us the wealthy districts of the Austrian Netherlands.

The enemy, confused by the activity of the French army, withdrew beyond Brussels. Bruges submitted on the 18th, and the following night the king opened the trenches before Oudenarde. Lowendal, whom the king put in charge to conduct this siege, pressed the fortress with so much pertinacity that the governor capitulated on the third day and surrendered himself with his garrison as prisoners of war.

The king, to render the situation of the enemy still more difficult, lay siege also to Dendermonde, the Duke of Harcourt, lieutenant-general and captain of the guards, being in command. The enemy attempted to send help to the besieged; one of their detachments, which went up the river Scheldt, was attacked, a portion were taken prisoners, and notwithstanding the water with which the fortress was surrounded, the garrison, nine hundred strong, was obliged to capitulate on the 13th of August, and was put on parole not to serve for eighteen months.

While our troops were entering Dendermonde, Lowendal pressed the city of Ostende, and as approach to it was very difficult, the garrison, composed of four thousand men and reinforced continually by new troops whose arrival by sea was easy, he permitted a capitulation with honors on the 23rd, after ten days of trench digging. This conquest insured safety to the rest of the Austrian possessions in Flanders, and deprived England of the advantages of a direct communication with the Netherlands.

The conquest of Ostende was followed by that of Nieuport, and Lowendal who began the siege on the 13th of August, made the garrison prisoners of war on the 5th of September. There are few examples in our history of similar good fortune.

Of the whole country which the Queen of Hungary had possessed from Dendre to the sea, nothing was left her but the city of Ath. Clermont-Gallerande, lieutenant-general, was charged by the Marshal Count of Saxe to besiege it, and Clermont, after a week's investment, obliged the garrison to capitulate. This conquest insured good and quiet winter quarters, and increased the difficulties of the enemy in sustaining themselves in Brabant.

Such was the end of the campaign of the year 1745. The history of France nowhere presents a series of successes so well knit together. The king at Choisy, troubled to hear that our generals on account of their jealousy were the greatest enemies of France, insisted upon observing them himself and watching over all our troops. It is possible that if he had not been present the gentlemen of the court would have allowed the Marshals of Saxe and Lowendal to acquire the reputation of being heroes.

Notwithstanding all these successes Maria-Theresa remained firm, the more places we took from her the more obstinate she became in her determination to make a treaty which should respect the integrity of her possessions; she wished everything or nothing. No disagreeable news could upset her tranquillity. Louis, in the midst of his successes, was forced to continue the conquest of Flanders; he ordered the Marshal of Saxe to take Brussels, the capital of Brabant, during the winter.

Notwithstanding the harshness of the season, the difficulty of transportation and the resistance of a garrison of eighteen battalions and nine squadrons, the siege was conducted with such activity and intelligence that on the 13th of January the place was invested on all sides. The trenches were opened, and the garrison were obliged to surrender as prisoners of war on February 7th.

Brussels once taken, the king directed his forces against the city of Antwerp. The enemy used the Dile and the Nethe as ramparts. But the Marshal of Saxe assembled the army near Brussels, and all obstacles were cleared away. Louvain, Malines, Lierre, Herenthalz were quickly evacuated. The fort Sainte-Marguerite surrendered. Antwerp, abandoned by its garrison, opened its gates to Louis; that part which had taken refuge in the citadel capitulated on the 31st of May, after a siege of six days conducted by the Count Clermont; and after this conquest the whole of Brabant passed under the control of the king.

The capture of Mons would give the king all that remained to the Queen of Hungary in Hainaut. The Prince of Conti, at the head of his army, attacked this place on the 7th of June, and though there were long and heavy rains the trenches were opened on the 24th. The twelve battalions in garrison there were made prisoners of war.

The enemy on account of this success were unable to penetrate into Brabant, or into the conquered part of Flanders. The roads of the province of Hainaut, which the taking of Mons had brought under the sway of the king, were closed to them. For this reason the Prince of Conti was sent to Charleroy and the Marquis de la Fare, lieutenant-general, was sent to Saint-Guilhain. These two places were taken in a few days; that of Charleroy was one of the strongest in the whole district.

The city of Namur was then the last stronghold of the Queen of Hungary. It was situated between the ocean and the Meuse, and was a most advantageous point from which to penetrate into the districts which were newly conquered. In order to keep it the Queen of Hungary had concentrated all her forces in a camp whose position rendered it almost impregnable. The Marshal of Saxe secured all the advantages of a victory without fighting. By strategic marches and well-devised movements, he deprived the enemy of all provisions, forced him to decamp, and lead his army back beyond the river Meuse. The troops of the enemy crossed that river on the 29th of August, and Namur was surrounded on the 5th of September by the Count de Clermont who opened the trenches. The city capitulated on the 12th, and, the garrison having withdrawn into the castles, Clermont conducted an attack with so much activity and capability that the thirteen battalions which defended them were obliged to accept the conditions that he wished to impose. They were made prisoners of war on the 30th, the sixth day after the opening of the trenches.

Although the French were victorious in the Netherlands they were on the defensive in Germany. Maria-Theresa was occupied there with the King of Prussia, who made a very favorable diversion for the French during the conquest of the Netherlands.

The Emperor Charles VII. who had furnished the pretext for this sanguinary war, died the 20th of January, 1745, and it was thought that since the cause of the war no longer existed, the scourge would not continue to torment Europe. But the Queen of Hungary had another view, she wished to become empress and take possession of the whole of her inheritance. She had made a treaty with the Elector of Saxony and with Holland and England, and was conducting negotiations with the son of the emperor, who had become at the death of his father, Elector of Bavaria. France, an old friend an ally of his house, had done everything to assist him at the expense of the house of Austria; Louis had given an army to his father, Charles VII., had put at his disposal his treasures and the blood of the French, and continued to give the same help to the young elector, now eighteen years old. Louis provided him with a great army, armed him from head to foot as he had the emperor his father, and paid for him six thousand Hessians, three thousand Palatines, and thirteen battalions of Germans.

This little ingrate, disdaining the lessons of his father, who when dying had made him promise never to forget what he owed to the King of France, listened to the suggestions of Maria-Theresa, and by means of money paid by the English, which Maria-Theresa had the shrewdness to promise him, he treated secretly with her, and promised her his vote for the election of her husband whom the queen was ambitious to make emperor.

This prince added to his disloyalty the treason of a dishonorable man; he consented to allow his troops to be joined to those of Maria-Theresa against the French, his protectors and allies. Our army, commanded by the Marquis de Ségur, was then defending the approaches of Bavaria against the Austrian troops; the traitor ordered his troops, a week before the signature of his treaty, to withdraw towards Munich, without giving notice to Ségur, who, having only five thousand men, was attacked unexpectedly by fifteen thousand Austrians, whom he fought three days with great courage while retreating. And this is what the King of France gained by trying to make this creature emperor of Germany and to take from the Austrian nation a dignity which had no real significance. After perfidies of this nature of which all our history is filled, what confidence can any nation have in the promises and morality of princes who devour each other in turn in such cold blood? Truth demands however that it be added that the young Elector of Bavaria, surrounded by nobles who had sold themselves to Maria-Theresa, was a victim of Austrian intrigue; for his hand trembled and he grew pale when he signed his treaty with Maria-Theresa.

Nothing could equal the surprise of the council of Versailles when it heard of his disloyalty. Having resolved to take away the dignity of the Elector of Bavaria, the court of Versailles had no longer any imperial head to oppose to the husband of Maria-Theresa.

She had taken away from us the son of Charles VII.; the cabinet of Versailles attempted to take from her the Elector of Saxony, King of Poland, who had been the ally of the queen, receiving subsidies from the English. But the King of Poland refused our offers and left France still more astonished. Yet the king made, this year (1745), the most brilliant conquests, the most illustrious campaigns, and the marshals of Saxe and Lowendal proved that Frenchmen under resolute leaders, superior to the intrigues of the court, incapable of jealousy and gifted with a firm and constant character, were still capable of the greatest heroism.

Maillebois, who had conducted the war in Corsica and who knew how to fight in a mountainous country, was sent from Germany into Italy, from whence the prince of Conti was recalled and was placed at the head of the army in Germany. In vain did he oppose the election of the emperor. The imperial troops protected the diet of Frankfort, and Maria-Theresa gave back to the house of Austria the imperial dignity.

The circumstances of this emperor, who was dominated by a woman who was as able as she was imperious, is worthy of some remark. He was heir of the house of Lorraine, but had lost his possessions by marriage. He was invested with an empty dignity as emperor, his wife alone having the real power. He had the title of King of Hungary and of Bohemia, but the queen governed those kingdoms despotically. The marital right remained to him, but the empress accorded her favors only when she wished. This most ridiculous individual, both prince and subject, and invested with the first dignity of the world, had not the authority of the smallest princeling of Germany. There were at that time but three great persons in Europe: the Queen of Spain, Maria-Theresa, and King Frederick.

Frederick was then fighting against Austria and against the Electors of Bavaria, Hanover and Saxony. The empress queen negotiated at St. Petersburg to obtain an army to go against Frederick, and to help Poland. Frederick, who was on the point of succumbing under the weight of so many enemies, addressed himself to Louis XV., his ally, who had just conquered the Netherlands and was threatening Holland. But he begged us in vain not to withdraw our troops from Germany. Louis answered that our army in the Netherlands had fulfilled the duties of a good ally by a favorable diversion. Frederick desired more immediate help but the king remained firm, and Frederick in his impatience signed, in Dresden, on the 25th of December, 1745, a new treaty between Austria and Saxony, and deprived France a second time of his friendship. We supported alone the burden of the war, and Maria-Theresa, being relieved in Germany, was in shape to supply new troops to Italy. This new defection of the King of Prussia was the source of the reverses which the French and the Spaniards suffered in Italy in the year 1746, while the diversions in England which called King George to his island, allowed us to conquer the Netherlands.

CHAPTER LXIX.

About the court of King Stanislas, father-in-law of Louis XV.—Character and adventures of this prince.—His political doctrine about royalty.—Form of his government in Lorraine.—Customs of his court and of the Lorraine nobility.—Anecdotes and love intrigues. —Harshness of the character of the nobles in Lorraine before the reign of Stanislas. Reign of arts and letters in Lorraine.—Principal persons who had an influence upon the change of manners.—About the house of Beauvau.—Portrait of the Marshal de Beauvau.—Philosophers and writers called to the court of the king.—Humanity of Stanislas.—Good order of his house; employment of his savings.—His sad end.—History of Bébé, dwarf of the King of Poland.

WE give here a description of the court of Lunéville, taken from the unedited Memoirs of President Hénault, of the year 1746. "We all regret," he says, "not to have seen the reign of Henry IV.; but one has only to go to Lunéville, to Inville, to Malgrange, to find it. Stanislas is a gay conversationalist; he says the most pleasing things; he narrates correctly; he sees well; he has a fertile and agreeable imagination, as one can judge in seeing his houses. These are not built in our fashion, and I was afraid that, at the end, I might find myself in Turkey, but I was assured again by seeing in the forest a figure of St. Francis instead of Mahomet. Lately a well-known foreign gentleman came to present himself to Stanislas, in order to get a position at his court which would be equivalent to the one which he had had at the court of Lorraine. 'What charge had you?' asked Stanislas. 'Sire, I was grand master of ceremonies.' 'Bah, sir!' replied the King of Poland, 'I do not allow myself to be troubled with ceremony.'

"Stanislas indeed allowed the officers, whom the court of funds had given him, to dispense with most of the troublesome practices of etiquette and ceremonial. His house was that of a rich gentleman of the times rather than that of the father of the Queen of France. We relate here how it was composed from the first.

"La Galaisière was nominated chancellor, keeper of the seals, chief of the council of the King of Poland, and minister in charge of the affairs of France near the King of Poland.

"The Duke Ossolinski was grand master; he was no longer a revolutionary duke who had taken away the diamonds of the crown of Poland. The Count Zaluski was great almoner, the Chevalier de Wiltz was great equerry, and the Commander de Thianges, who played the rôle of king when he went to Warsaw before his second election, was his great huntsman. The Count of Ossonville was his great wolf-hunter, and the Count Béthune his great chamberlain. The Marquis of Stainville was nominated as his great chamberlain; but declining with thanks he went to keep the table of the Duke of Lorraine in Brussels, with twelve thousand florins pension.

"There were also given to the King of Poland six ordinary chamberlains; the Count du Croix, the Counts de Ligneville, Netampcourt, Serimchamp, Brassac and the

Chevalier de Meuse. There were added two pensioners having the honors of grand officers, namely the Counts de Bercheny, and d'Andelot; and twelve chamberlains of honor, namely the Marquis de Lamberty, de Choiseul, du Châtelet, du Cusine, de Salles, de Bousey; the Counts de Torneille, de Ludre, d'Honelstin and the Chevalier du Châtelet. Finally he was given two gentlemen for the chamber, Castéja and Vanglas; Massoles and La Roche-Aymont for the second table; Miascoski and Grossoles for the hunt, and six other gentlemen for his buildings, music and the government of the pages, with twelve gentlemen *d'honores.*

"Madame de Linanges was nominated lady of honor to the queen, and the Marquise de Boufflers, Madame de Salles, daughter of the Duke of Brancas, Madame de Choiseul and Madame de Raigecourt were the first ladies of the palace.

"The court soon developed its own character; there could be noticed especially a mixture of gallantry and devotion.

"The king, who wrote sometimes like a devout prince and other times in the bold principles of a philosopher, took slight liberties in public with women. Being less reserved than the king and less decent, the gentlemen of the court and the ladies of the queen lived much more freely. The court of Lunéville was a place of pleasure. Faithlessness of husband and wife was a common thing there. Some anecdotes may serve to show the condition of morals at the court of Lorraine and the character of the gentlemen who had found there a change from the feudal harshness which existed at the beginning of the reign of the King of Poland.

"Stanislas, having returned from Dantzig had brought with him the Duchess Ossolinska, whom he loved, and a sister of this lady, called the princess palatine of Russia, who was very handsome. The Chevalier de Wiltz, a Pole, colonel of the regiment of Stanislas Cavalerie, loved her so tenderly that the Duke of Bourbon, who was informed of it and had been touched by her beauty, did not care to marry her. The Count of Taillebourg, afterward Duke of Châtelleraut, less scrupulous, married her but insisted that his wife should break off her relations with the Chevalier de Wiltz; but instead of leaving the chevalier, Madame de Châtelleraut continued to live with him as before.

"One day the Duke of Châtelleraut was informed that supper was served; being occupied with serious reading, he answered that madame could take a seat at the table and continued his reading in his cabinet.

"Madame de Châtelleraut came herself to prevail upon her husband who continued his reading. The Chevalier de Wiltz came following madame, and the duke begged of him to withdraw; but the chevalier, continuing to joke and to press him to come to the table, Châtelleraut threw a candle-stick at his head. They drew their swords, the commotion was heard all over the castle, and the king hastened in to separate the combatants.

"After this adventure Châtelleraut left the court and came to reside in Paris, where he lived separated from his wife until the death of the Chevalier de Wiltz. Then his confessor urged him to live with her in the same palace to give a good example to the public. The King Stanislas, in order to recompense him, gave him the regiment of the Chevalier de Wiltz who had been the cause of the infidelity of Madame de Châtelleraut. Châtelleraut changed his name at that time and called himself Prince de Talmondt.

"The Princess of Talmondt had loved Wiltz with so much passion that the faithlessness of the chevalier did not separate her from him. She came one day to his house at seven o'clock in the morning, forced the doors, and found him in bed with Madame de Lamberty.

"The Count von Salm, who had become a prince, appeared in Lunéville in the year 1742, and there fell in love with de la Plotte, who afterward became the wife of Meuse, and begged her to break with Madame de Boufflers whose character he did not like; but he had to give up his sweetheart because she was unwilling to sacrifice friendship to love.

"Von Salm, desiring to amuse himself, attached himself to Madame de Lamberty, canoness of Remiremot, who was then in Lunéville with her mother. La Plotte, being jealous, put a spy upon his track, and one evening when he went to the trysting place he happened to catch the poor spy and left him half dead. Crazed with anger, La Plotte, in order to revenge herself, wrote Madame de Lamberty, the mother, to inform her of the love meetings of her daughter. This lady after reading the letter went to the apartment of her daughter, took her keys, searched everywhere, found in a box very pointed letters and the portrait of von Salm; she then beat her daughter, the canoness, and made the adventure public. But the canoness found means of writing to von Salm and begged him to have at the entrance of the grove, two hours after midnight, a post carriage, saying that she wished to come to Paris.

"He, having consulted the Count de Valbanglart, his friend, decided not to attempt this. Having no intention of marrying the canoness, he thought that such a step would be considered as an elopement. Requested by Madame de Lamberty to marry her daughter, the rhinegrave replied that he would willingly do it if he had not promised his sister, wife of the Prince de Horn, to marry the daughter of the prince, her husband. At this speech Madame de Lamberty became furious and showered reproaches upon him. The rhinegrave defended himself on the ground of the innocence of his intercourse with her daughter. 'I have seen your letters,' shouted the lady. At these words the rhinegrave burst into laughter and left her. He started a few days afterwards for Flanders, where he married the daughter of the Prince de Horn. Mlle. de Lamberty later married the nephew of the Abbé of Saint Hubert. The customs of the court of Lunéville resembled those of past centuries; lively and expressive passions had still the upper hand instead of the false and weak passions of the court of France.

"Choiseul and Beauvau altered much in Lorraine. As they frequented more and more the courts of the Dukes of Lorraine, they made very great progress in politeness. The Prince of Craon and the princess his wife, née Mme.

de Lingneville observed in their house the manners of the grandees of France. Passionately in love with each other when they were married at the beginning of the century, they lived during fifty years in such friendship and with such great tenderness that the habits of the Duke of Lorraine, the custom that he had of passing the evenings in their palace, even his reputation of being the lover of the princess could never disunite husband and wife.

"Stanislas who knew that they were devoted to the house of Lorraine had not the same confidence in the Prince de Craon. While admiring one day a handsome statue of the Duke de Lorraine the Prince de Craon, who had preserved it carefully, offered it to the King of Poland. 'It would be very useful to me,' replied Stanislas.—'But why?' replied the Prince de Craon. 'Because your majesty finds the statue so handsome; I will have the head changed and have in its place that of your majesty.' Never was a King of Poland so much embarrassed. 'Let it be as it is,' he said to the prince: 'you could not give my stoutness to the body and it would not resemble me.'

"Craon did not enjoy seeing the ancient race of kings passing into Toscana, and his own country submitted to a foreign prince. Intimately connected with the last duke, with little fortune for his high birth, with a large family to provide for, assured of the interest which the Lorraine princess took in the prosperity of his family, he saw with sorrow his country placed on the same level with other provinces and almost neglected by the French monarch.

"The esteem he enjoyed at the old court was such that having desired to make one of his daughters abbess of Épinal, in the year 1728, the Duke of Lorraine sent commissioners to install her either peaceably or by force. In vain the French Lorraine and the German canonesses declared themselves against this imposition, saying that the election should be free, and that they could not, according to their regulations, accept a nun of her house.

"The duke, far from being influenced by these reasons, ordered his commissioners to tell the ladies that he would exile from his states those who would not vote for Mlle. de Craon and would prevent them from getting the income of their prebend. The threat had the desired effect, and Mlle. de Craon, who was elected abbess at the age of fourteen was duly installed. Though the Dukes of Lorraine had the custom of treating with the nobility about taxes and other administrative matters, this anecdote suffices to show the state of despotism into which Lorraine had fallen under the last duke who governed it."

We give here another anecdote which shows the prejudice of the latter against the middle class.

"The Princess de Craon née Ligneville, of a family known for several centuries, was the aunt of Madame Helvétius, wife of the famous philosopher. One would have thought that at the death of the Prince de Craon M. Helvétius would have gone into mourning for his uncle. The Prince de Craon died in 1754; but on account of the distance between high-born gentlemen and bourgeois, his nephew, M. Helvétius did not assume mourning, and many people applauded him for his modesty.

"Of the twenty-two children born to the Prince of Craon there survived only the Prince de Beauvau and the Chevalier de Beauvau, four daughters who were nuns and five who were married: Mme. de Morvet Mme. de Mireproix, Mme. de Chimay, Mme. de Boufflers, and Mme. de Bassompierre; he had had several daughters who died rather young, and another son who was killed at Fontenoy. With regard to the prince, afterward Marshal de Beauvau, he distinguished himself as a young man in the service of France, served at the siege of Prague, was wounded there and also in the campaign of Italy in the year 1746, at the head of a detachment of troops with which he was intrusted. Being made brigadier of the armies of the king, and having received in 1757 the charge of captain of the *gardes du corps* by the death of the Marshal de Mireproix, grand master of the house of the King of Poland, he used his influence and talents to unite his own country to that of France and to make the Lorraines Frenchmen."

These memoirs which show vice with so much freedom, owe homage to virtue, to grand noble qualities and to thoroughly proved integrity. The author is pleased to say of the Marshal de Beauvau, that while at the court of Versailles and of Lunéville, being engaged in the Austrian party and bound by considerations to the ancient French party so decidedly against Austria, he still showed unswerving rectitude, and preserved at the corrupt court of Versailles the scrupulous conduct of an old

French chevalier. Being obliged by his office to serve the former arbitrary authority, he defended the cause of the people, and was the advocate of moderate and circumscribed authority when Louis intended to make it arbitrary by destroying the parliaments. We shall see him, in our history of the revolution, still defending the popular cause in its new forms; defending it in the councils of the king, accompanying him in a dangerous affair when the monarch, abandoned by the high-born and the princes, went to the Hotel de Ville to recognize the power of the revolution and to submit himself to the common will.

Let us go back to the anecdotes of the court of Stanislas and the Lorraine nobility.

"It was learned in the month of April that Madame de Béthisy, canoness of the Abby du Poussay, was one of the daughters of the Marquise de Meziéres, widow of the Marquis de Mezières. He was hump-backed, and the Duchess de Bourgogne made fun of him, which King Louis XIV. disapproved and said to her, 'Madame, my enemies never knew that Mezières was hump-backed.'

"The other daughters of this hump-back were the Princess de Montauban, the Princess de Ligne and Mme. de Béthisy, who was sent to the court of Lorraine to get a place there but who did not succeed because the Cardinal de Fleury, who knew her to be very clever, feared her wit and counsel at the court of Stanislas.

"The queen, who loved Mme. de Béthisy, made her Canoness du Poussay, with the object of making her abbess of the chapter. This caused many jealousies; and although they were accustomed to live in liberty and to have people talk about them, they pretended to be scandalized because Mme. de Béthisy, who was not more scrupulous than the others and was loved by Lord Tirconel, her cousin, mysteriously disappeared from the Poussay in the month of March, 1740.

"The canonesses wrote the queen in the name of the chapter, asking that Mme. de Béthisy be called back, 'because her absence was dishonoring their house to the extent that people were saying that she had absented herself in order to have a child.' The queen became irritated, and wrote them that their slanders were worthy of punishment. This provoked a second letter from the chapter which said that, guided by the words of her majesty, they would disbelieve the false stories, but that in order to stop them the chapter begged of her majesty to send word to Mme. de Béthisy to come back very promptly in order to destroy by her presence the bad opinion of the public. It was on Friday, the 6th of May following, that the Marquise de Mezières, accompanied by four commissioners whom she had asked from the court, one of whom was Lamberty, brought back her daughter to the chapter in order to justify herself. This step did not change in any way the opinion of the chapter nor that of the court, and Mme. de Béthisy would have been appointed abbess if she had not died a tragic death, of which we shall speak further on.

"After have passionately loved Lord Tirconal for a long time, Mme. de Béthisy was taken with another passion; she devoted herself to the chevalier, his brother, who, after having loved her with equal ardor, ceased caring for her. She tried in vain to revenge herself, or to bring him back to her; she sought to make him jealous, choosing as a favorable person the Chevalier de Meuse; but after having granted him her favors she repented of such a vengeance and wrote him this letter:—

"'Remember, my angel, the unhappy voyage in which you gave me a hundred proofs of your indifference, which you had the cruelty to confirm by letters. I was very much troubled by them at first; but after reflection I hoped that, being touched by my tenderness and my pain, you would change your mind. It was in vain that I tried to renew in your heart the affection which had been the cause of my happiness; you persisted in refusing me, and made me understand that jealousy was the cause of your refusal. You delivered me up to every torment. Then I remembered your natural inconstancy, and the proofs which you have given me so often of it were so vividly before my mind as to led me to conclude that you had abandoned me. This idea made me revengeful. I considered my attachment for you a source of eternal misfortune, and I tried to dispel it from my mind. Meuse unfortunately seemed the man to ease the horror of my mind, and not only did I listen to him, but I made him see that conquering me would be an easy thing for him. He wished to take advantage of this, but my heart, accustomed to the sweetness of loving you alone, could not abandon itself to another. Indeed, M. de Meuse did not inspire me with a passion, I must admit; he seemed to me amiable; and the impression he made upon me was so strong that I even promised myself pleasure in my revenge; and if I did not love him, at least I flattered myself that time and your indifference would produce such a feeling. I left him with these sentiments; he took care to feed them and to fortify them by letters which reminded me only too much of him. In this interval we had, you and I, an explanation which made me feel that my duty was to yield only to the tenderness which I had for you. I detested the idea which I had had at first to shun you, and though you made a mistake in your jealousy, I secretly reproached myself. I took up my chains again, and became a greater slave than ever of the passion with which you had inspired me. My views of M. de Meuse were changed by this attitude of my mind; I even believed that I could grant him the permission which he asked of coming to see me, without his presence changing my sentiments. But my angel, I did not know his whole power. I did not see him without emotion. His speeches, his entreaties seduced me, and without any other excuse than my own weakness I granted him yesterday the victory. I avow this to you with shame and pain. You will hate me, my angel, and you will be right; but this is not enough; you must be revenged, and I shall take care of that myself. I will deliver you from this monster, who has violated the most sacred rights of a tender love. Yes, the state in which I am is terrible enough to satisfy the most inhuman desire for vengeance. But I owe the relief to my own self, and I can find it only by freeing myself from these horrors by death. It is better to get away from them than to languish under the tyranny of my regrets; my days would be only a web of misfortune which I should have deserved. Do not hate me in these last moments, I implore you! May my tears and my blood blot from your mind the remembrance of my crime! My last sigh is still for you. Yes, my angel, I die adoring you, and I only ask of you as a last kindness that you remember how I loved you, that I adored but you, and that until that sad moment, my tenderness and my constancy have always kept me true. Can I flatter myself that this remembrance will make my memory less odious? Ah! could I die in your arms my death would be less cruel. I would, perhaps, have the consolation of having you regret one who was faithless. But you, my angel, you will be revenged; receive my last kisses; do not refuse to receive them; they are as tender and as sincere as ever. Preserve your life, I ask you that upon my knees; do not let my death bring you any regrets which could possibly trouble its sweetness; I do not deserve it any longer.'

"After having written this letter, Mme. de Béthisy fired three bullets into her right temple and she was found bathed in blood at the Abbey du Poussay, on the 5th of April, 1742. Stanislas, who was seized with consternation, as indeed was the whole court, prohibited any investigation of the suicide.

"Madame de Béthisy had courage, intellect and much character; she knew several languages which she spoke marvelously well, and she had adopted some of the ideas of modern philosophy. She was generally regretted."

It is seen by these anecdotes what the manners of the nobility and of the court in Lorraine were before the king had softened them. Civilization had not yet made progress as at the court of Louis XIV., and this little state, for a long time devastated by war, a long time deprived of its sovereign, who was kept away from it by the French armies, found itself far behind the times. Therefore the striking anecdotes of the beginning of the reign of Stanislas were nothing but powerful loves, violent jealousies, duels and suicides. Before the reign of Stanislas the nobility of Lorraine hardly knew how to read.

It was reserved for the good King Stanislas to temper by the influence of arts, philosophy, and quiet, decent pleasures these nobles who were so high spirited ; and to oppose the amiability of his mind and the philosophers whom he called to his court, to the usuages of the preceding centuries.

The Prince de Beauvau was one of those who had great influence over the reform in the habits of his court. He had a noble face and a manly bearing; representative of the time of Louis XIV.; he spoke in beautiful and choice language, and he wrote in the same style. His mind was filled with all kinds of knowledge, and when, towards the end of the reign of Stanislas, the old age of the courtiers, who were of the age of the king, had given a certain monotony to the court at Lunéville, the presence of the Prince de Beauvau awakened them from that languid tone which is natural to old age. The Prince de Beaufremont had not, at the court of Stanislas, the character which his father had shown at the court of France, nor the spirit of opposition which he had shown against the arbitrary actions or the French government. Beaufremont showed, when he was with Stanislas, only the agreeable side of his nature. He knew French politeness thoroughly and all the details of manners of the reign of Louis XIV.; he had the good taste of an educated gentleman for the arts, for that which was noble and honest, also for the mild gallantries which followed the violent passions of the beginning of the reign of Stanislas.

The Count de Tresson had also great influence toward the same result; he distinguished himself by the happy choice of delicate pleasures, by ingenious repartee, by apt allusions, by light poems of which the spirit and the refinement are well known.

Voltaire, in great demand by several kings, came also to the court at Lunéville, and his poetry and works pleased much more than his person. When he wished he could be the most amiable of all the courtiers; it was not difficult for him then to show himself superior to all by the grace and interest of his conversation, for he was in society what he is in his works; but he showed too often an unbearable and morose humor. He was the spoiled child of fortune, who, feeling more vividly than the rest of mankind and often moved by the variety and the delicacy of his sensations, grasped ideas which were inaccessible to the mind of common humanity. And as he had never disciplined himself to endure the courtiers, he constantly took advantage of the authority which his great renown gave him over all men, in order to live without any constraint at Lunéville as he had lived in Berlin and as he lived at his own home on his estate des Délices.

The president Hénault, the most refined and most amiable of the courtiers, loved by the King Stanislas, and by the queen his daughter, came very often to Lunéville; he had made his study of the life of a courtier in the very parliament of Paris where, during the Regency, he had worked with so much success to reconcile the magistracy with the government. His peaceful ways, the grace and vigor of his mind, his sweet and agreeable face made him loved and looked up to by everybody who was esteemed and considered at that time.

In this way, by the influence of letters, philosophy, arts and good taste, the court of Stanislas was imperceptibly changed. The court which was maintained according to this standard, had, when it declined, only a monotonous society composed of elderly people, who knew nothing of the vices which soiled the court of Versailles toward the end of the reign of Louis XV. Stanislas was always the father and friend of the people of Lorraine; he loaded his province with favors, and detached it entirely from the interests of the house of Lorraine, though some acts of arbitrary force can be laid to his charge.

Stanislas himself had a love of the beautiful. He was passionately devoted to letters and the arts. He worked his whole life to beautify the capital of the province; he created academies; he erected a statue to the king, his son-in-law and successor; he wrote several literary works in which a tone of kindness and honesty prevails such as belong only to spirits which are as filled with it as he was. He also wrote a bold philosophic work, the publication of which was prevented for a long time by the Bishop of Verdun, a famous fanatic. But historians who like to penetrate to the bottom of the human heart reproach him for having been sometimes slightly dishonest at gaming.

Stanislas detested the house of Austria; he did not approve of its alliance with France, and wrote anonymous pamphlets against the union.

Nothing pleased the King of Poland more than presenting him a handsome statue or a distinguished artist or a discovery in the sciences. He was full of witticisms and brilliant repartee. He had a certain Father de Menou, a Jesuit in his castle, because it was fashionable then with the princes to have a trusty Jesuit. And as Father de Menou was the only one at the court of Lunéville who had the courage to deceive the good, virtuous, and truthful Stanislas, this prince said one day to an artist who had failed to catch his expression in a picture: "Address yourself to Father de Menou here, if you wish to 'catch' me easily." This repartee paints the king and the priest.

King Stanislas being in Paris in 1756 desired to see at her house Mme. de Montconseil, an illustrious woman of the time, who joined to beauties of form and feature, delicate manners and an ingenious mind. She had made of her house, *de Bagatelle*, in the Bois de Boulogne, a genuine jewel, and knowing that the King of Poland was to see her there, she was careful that the prince, who ate much and early, should find on his arrival a very excellent repast. The king dined with good appetite, and admired the troop of young Savoyards, who immediately on his entrance, made their bows fly, and played most delightful music; the most able musicians of the time had disguised themselves in this way to surprise him.

In the afternoon "Barcelonnettes" offered to show him "curiosities" with the music of a hurdy-gurdy; what was shown were all the reliefs of the beautiful buildings of Stanislas in Nancy. After dinner, coffee was taken in the garden and a merry act of an opera was given. Stanislas admitted that he had never seen anything so well thought out and so flattering to himself; he had however introduced at his court at that time the same good manners, the same taste and the same delicacy.

Stanislas, who rarely came to the court of Louis XV., always appeared respectful to the king and simple and kind to the queen. He was heard to use the word "thou" to her in this way: "See, Mary, here is my wig; look out that nobody touches it until I awaken; I am going to sleep upon thy sofa." In the private life of their apartment he was like a true father to her, and asked of her the most common services, those of the daughter of a simple bourgeois.

Another time he was heard saying: "Look here, Mary, Providence protects honest people; thou hadst no chemise in the year 1725, and now thou art Queen of France!"

Stanislas was short sighted and he had become so fat that he could not walk unless he was supported. He often went out, and cured all his colds by taking the fresh air. He went to bed at nine o'clock in the evening and arose at five or six in the morning and took before his dinner nothing but bouillon or tea. He was still amiable in the year 1756, odd in his expressions, and he was pleased to take slight liberties with the ladies of his kingdom, as he had done in his youth, calling them always peccadilloes. The Queen of Poland, who was never able to get entirely naturalized, kept constantly in mind the idea of returning one day to Poland. She had in Lorraine a house of which Villancourt was administrator. She was jealous of her husband, and even at the age of sixty had this passion deeply rooted in her mind. M. de Choiseul was her chevalier of honor; Mme. de Linanges was her lady of honor. She had six other ladies of the palace, four pages, eight foot valets, sixty horses, a table for herself, one for her lady of honor, one for Villancourt, who, with two hundred thousand livres per year, provided for everything with the greatest elegance. He paid the bills every month and always had a surplus. There has never been a more beautiful arrangement; it dated from the arrival of Stanislas, and it lasted until his death. With twenty-four hundred thousand livres of income well administered, he gave to his court the style of the richest sovereigns.

Under this arrangement Stanislas had at the end of each month an amount which he employed for humanitarian works. Louis did not in the year 1740 believe that he could hoard up money because the Court of Lorraine was splendid notwithstanding its small revenue;

so the King of Poland wanted to show him by facts the reality of his savings. He sent therefore to Louis four hundred thousand livres under the ministry of the Cardinal de Fleury of which he only asked the income of forty thousand livres, to be turned over to the Queen of Poland, his wife, in case of death, or to the Queen of France his daughter. It pleased Louis that Stanislas placed money to the credit of the Queen of France and he contented himself with saying, "This is a good lesson for me." The lessons were there, but the will and the force were lacking to have them put in execution by himself.

The King of Poland afterwards left to Louis an immense amount of furniture, with the condition that he should pay, at his death, the eight million livres which he would set aside for charities, for the officers of his house and for his servants.

He gave the city of Bar eighteen thousand écus to buy grain when it was low and to sell it again to the poor at a moderate rate, but still with a small profit which would increase imperceptibly the sum and spread it successively over other cities of the province.

We should never finish if we tried to write down the details of the goodness of Stanislas, and to relate his death is really painful. That of Louis XIV. was a day of triumph for the people of Paris, who called him the bad king; that of Stanislas was a day of mourning and distress.

This good prince, who was never severe upon his servants, while sleeping one day alone near his fire-place, was burned by the fire flame catching his dress; painful wounds gave him a violent fever and he died on the 23rd of Feb., 1766,—a Titus of the eighteenth century.

A phenomenon concerning the human race which occupied the attention of King Stanislas for a long time will delay the course of this history for a little. As it concerns men considered physically we will occupy ourselves a moment with it.

Stanislas had a friend prodigious by his smallness; this was Bébé, born in 1741, who weighed one pound when born, and was swathed in cotton and put into a wooden shoe. He was given to the king when five years old; he was nineteen inches high, but very handsome and well proportioned. He could go underneath a chair like a squirrel in order to hide himself and to be called by the king, and it pleased him to put everybody into fright. Often he disappeared from the company by hiding himself under the skirts of the ladies, and each one of them was afraid of crushing him.

He was very malicious from an early age: he affected pride on account of his smallness, and enjoyed breaking glasses and porcelain. When backgammon was played his impatience was extreme on account of the painful noise of the draughts and of the dice box, and if they did not wish him to retire they had to give up the game, for he was only quiet when he was placed upon the table. He then went into the backgammon board, put all the draughts in piles, sat upon them, and let himself fall off to amuse the company; however, he only did this when he was in good humor. The King of Poland gave him a palace which was three feet high in one of the largest and handsomest halls of the castle; Bébé walked about his house and went there to pout. When the king refused to execute his orders, or when he wanted to resist the king, he shut himself up in his rooms, and when the king called him he answered from an open window; "Please tell the king that I am not at home." Then it was necessary to promise him a new dress in order to get him to obey the king. Stanislas had him given clothes of all colors and forms: that of the Hussar was the one which suited him the best.

It is said that Bébé was never acquainted with the idea of God; he lived and died an atheist.

Bébé however had lively passions; he got angry easily and was very jealous of objects which were in proportion to his smallness. He showed this feeling very much in regard to some dogs belonging to several of the ladies and believing that their fondling of these animals deprived him of the caresses he expected himself, he threw a number of these dogs through the window.

At the age of fifteen Bébé showed other desires. Perceiving that many very bold things were allowed to dwarfs like him, he put his little hands into the bosoms of the ladies of the court and soon afterwards gave a description to the king.

Up to this age Bébé, who was not twenty-nine inches high, had not felt any derangement in any part of his body, but he could not withstand the change which took place at the age of puberty. He became old, he became sad and feeble; his spine became curved and he died in the year 1764, after long agony. The Count de Tressen wrote the history of this dwarf whose skeleton can be seen in the cabinet of the royal gardens.

CHAPTER LXX.

Continuation of the anecdotes of the princes and the Court of France.—About the legitimate princes.—Death of the Duke du Maine and of the Count of Toulouse, legitimated sons of Louis XV.—Old age of the Duchess du Maine.—Last quarrel of the legitimate princes with the legitimated ones.—The Count de Clermont.—Habits of the legitimate and the legitimated princes compared.—The Princess de Conti.—The prince, her husband.—Her father and mother.—The Condés.—Charolais.—The old Duke of Orléans, theologian at Sainte-Geneviève.—The Duke and the Duchess de Chartres.—Their portrait.—Continuation of the rivalry between the Spanish House of the Bourbons and the House of Orléans.

THE Duke du Maine who had stirred up the whole kingdom towards the end of the reign of Louis XIV. and who had intrigued so much in union with his wife during his minority, had a sad end in the year 1736. A cancerous humor ate his face to such an extent that there remained no longer a human countenance. He had asked pardon of the duchess his sister for everything that had passed between the legitimate and legitimated princes, and she was so touched by it that she wished to be reconciled with him. The Count de Toulouse, his brother, the Duchess of Orléans and all the children desired to see him; but his ulcers having such a terrible odor and the patient being so much frightened when he saw himself in a mirror, he did not have the courage to allow this visit.

For several years a great emptiness had followed his former activity of mind and of character. Gloomy, a dreamer, withdrawn from the world, unwilling to take part in pleasures, he left, to be divided, an immense and curious collection of snuff boxes of all forms. This taste was the only human quality which remained to him.

As the Duke du Maine was solitary and a nonentity, so was his wife active. The Duke du Maine was reserved, distrustful, polite, insinuating; his wife was haughty and imperious and she had him entirely subject to her will and caprice.

She had such a love of independence that she made up her mind never to eat with her guests, so that she could go to the table only when her appetite called for it and without submitting herself to any fixed hour. When her appetite declared itself, she had to be served immediately; therefore there were always chickens at the spit, and her table always ready for her.

Madame du Maine had the reputation of being an inconsiderate woman; and here follows an example. M. de Fervaques, having begged of her one day to excuse him from gaming, so that he should not loose a roll of fifty louis which he did not wish to touch, Madame du Maine begged of him to carry fifty louis in a roll to her jeweler in Paris. Distracted and full of excitement, not having given them to Fervaques, but having mislaid them in the morning and swearing and protesting before the players that she had given them to Fervaques, she insisted that he should prove that he did not have them. Fervaques, disconcerted, swore that he had no money with him and that if he had any it didn't belong to

Madame du Maine; but the onlookers, seeing him blush, become pale and stammer, judged him guilty, and desired, as did Madame du Maine herself, that he should prove that he had no money upon his person. He refused to have himself searched, and increased the indignation against him, but at that moment a valet-de-chambre showed Madame du Maine the place where she had left her money.

The Count of Toulouse died one year after the Duke du Maine, burdened with the offices and dignities with which his father Louis XIV. had invested him. He was admiral, lieutenant-general and governor of Bretagne.

As the Duke du Maine had been active and intriguing, so was the Count of Toulouse modest, quiet and timid. The Duke du Maine had not made a very happy marriage; the Count of Toulouse, on the contrary, found his happiness in the careful education which he gave to the Duke de Penthièvre in company with his wife. There was but one bed for both from the beginning of their marriage, and no event separated them.

There still remained at the time of his death some enmity between the princes of the blood and the legitimated princes, which dated from their quarrels during their minority.

The Count de Toulouse, the Duke du Maine and their wives for example did not speak with their sister Mme. la Duchesse; they did not see each other even when they died.

The Marshal de Noailles, trustee of the Duke du Maine's testament, read it in presence of the dowager countess, the

Duke de Penthièvre, the procureur-general and the avocat-general, testamentary executioners. He left to his wife the income of an estate of eighty thousand livres, and a big yellow diamond to his sister the Duchess of Orléans.

When this death was announced to the king, he gave the charge of grand veneur to the Prince de Dombes, and the Duke de Penthièvre received the two regiments of his father. These favors made the Princess du Conti talk very loud, and M. le Duke hastened to Versailles, asking the charge of grand veneur for the Count de Charolais. The Princess de Conti, her sister, who was ready also to ask it for her son, went to the cardinal and raged like a fury against "the bastards." The cardinal answered that the king loved the Count de Toulouse, and that he wished to prove that he loved his son too.

The old fires between the legitimate and the legitimated princes were kindled anew at the appointment of a guardian for the Duke de Penthièvre. The Duke of Orléans insisted upon the pretensions of his ward in order to maintain the rights which had been reserved to his father. The Count de Charolais and the princesses joined themselves to him. The Count de Clermont, Abbé de Saint Germain des Prés, was neutral;—M. le Duke kept himself in his rank;—the king gave patent letters by which, without deciding for the future, he decreed that his guardianship should be decided by parliament, instead of "in the Châtelet," a privilege reserved to the princes of the blood only.

The project of the marriage of the Duke de Penthièvre in the year 1740 awakened again those long-standing quarrels. It was to be determined what should be the rank which the children of legitimated princes should have. Mme. the Princess de Conti consented to give her daughter to the young prince provided that their children should hold a recognized rank; and while the quarrel of the princes grew more lively, the Duke of Orléans declared in very formal terms that having been himself brought up by a legitimated mother, he would be glad to do all that could be done for the legitimated princes. The Count de Charolais agreed but Mlle. de Clermont, Mlle. de Sens, the Count de Clermont and the Prince de Conti opposed themselves most decidedly to these pretensions, and made a memorandum which the Prince de Conti, who neither saw nor loved the cardinal, gave to the king in person. The legitimated children presented also their account. What they demanded and what the princes refused were mere puerilities,—affairs about ceremony and etiquette; but at the court these trifles were of great importance, and the princes said very decidedly that they would even run the risk of being exiled rather than not to stand up against the pretensions of the legitimated princes. Mme. de Vintimille, who was in the year 1740 reigning mistress, and who had declared herself in favor of the legitimated ones, tried to persuade the Count de Clermont that their demands would not do any harm to the princes of the blood.

The count withdrew dissatisfied and in ill humor after a three hours' conversation. The princes of the blood, who kept the dukes aloof from them as much as they could and let them feel their difference of rank, tried to unite themselves in order to fortify their own party against the legitimated princes. Let us preserve for future times the memory of this child's play; their pretensions showed well that the men in high places did not know anything more than to occupy themselves at the court of France with questions of servile etiquette which belonged to degraded nations. The legitimated proposed, for example, that their children should receive the king's shirt when he went to bed or arose, from a waiter of the garde-robe; while the princes should receive it from the first valet-de-chambre; and it was the same with the other trifles with which they occupied themselves so seriously. It is true that the princes and the high dignitaries of the state having formerly allowed their prerogatives to be lost, and the ministers having invaded their former power, the latter left for the amusement of the gentlemen of the court hardly anything except etiquette, women, hunting, dogs and horses.

The business concerning the rank of the legitimated princes was unsettled, however, up to the time of the marriage of the Duke de Penthièvre, which could not be concluded without a rank being assured to his children. It was proposed to give them an intermediate state between the princes and peers; but the real cause of the quarrel lay in the jealousy which the princes and the peers had conceived against those whom they called "the bastards." Because they occupied important positions to the prejudice of the peers and princes, they united against the intermediate state. The princes did not wish it because they wished to attach to themselves the peers, and the peers because they had an interest to bring into their body the legitimated princes, as was done under the preceding reigns; thus insuring to the peers added distinction and a superior position. The Prince de Conti and the Count de Clermont did not cease intriguing, and among the dukes, Richelieu got up a petition to the king and carried it everywhere to have it signed. The king, who promised to receive the petition, seemed to have a desire that it should not be signed by everybody, and affected to say a few flattering words about the young Duke de Penthièvre. In order to conform themselves to the opinion of the king, the Dukes de Gèvres and de La Rochefoucauld presented another petition in which the peers, who formerly affected such a great superiority over the rest of the nobility, then allied themselves with it in order to be sustained against the legitimated.

"The Peers of France," says the petition, "being informed of the proceedings which the legitimated princes have taken in order to obtain, in favor of the children that may be born to the Duke de Penthièvre, a distinct rank from that of the whole nobility of your kingdom, a rank intervening between the princes of your blood and themselves, cannot refrain from bringing their rights to the notice of your majesty. They are deeply pained at being obliged to tell your majesty truths disagreeable to the Duke de Penthièvre, and if personal merit, worth and services, in an age so little advanced, were to decide about the precedence, they would be very far from making any opposition to his pretensions, but would rather consider it a duty to second them. But the merit which wins sentiment and esteem has no rank at all, and does not give any rights when birth does not bring it. Rank is regulated only according to the old laws of the kingdom, and according to that of your majesty in the creation of peers."

These words sufficed without doubt to prove the foolishness of the laws of the kingdom and the iniquitous pretensions of the peers. Were they ignorant of the fact that favorites had obtained, at all times, patent letters for the elevation of estates into duchies, and that the despot who created the titles by a simple act of his will in order to recompense some villainy, had the same power to give rank to virtue?

The other princes who had descended from the legitimated, (for instance, de Dombes), seeing the precarious position which they held at the court made efforts to please the king in order to obtain, by their assiduous attention, what by their birth would be refused them.

The Prince de Dombes, who had begun to appear in society and at the court, made himself interesting by his easy-going nature, which allowed him to go so far even as to be cook at la Muette, at Marly and at Choisy, where the king, followed by his ladies and favorites, was diverting himself.

The Duke de Penthièvre showed more dignity in his behavior; he did the honors of his house with much grace and politeness and by a great variety of attentions. He lived in perfect union with the Princess of Modena, his wife, who, having neither inherited the doubtful principles nor the passions of her mother, had only the sweet virtues which should belong to a religious and quiet marriage. M. de Penthièvre had a son in the year 1747, the Prince de Lamballe, so named on account of the attachment that the father had for the province of Bretagne, where he was loved and respected. He lost his beloved wife in child-birth and was nearly inconsolable.

The Count de Clermont had been such a spendthrift while in the army that his affairs were in the greatest disorder. He sold the king the estate of Châteauroux in Berri which had been estimated worth twenty-six hundred thousand livres. Orri refused for a long time to make good this purchase; but the situation of the prince was so urgent that he was given one hundred thousand livres in cash and care was taken to pay to his co-heirs nine hundred thousand livres which he owed them and eight hundred thousand livres afterward to himself at different occasions.

The Prince de Conti was no better off in his affairs. Flooded with debts, Mme. d'Artic, who for a long time had been his mistress, helped him often in his most urgent needs. His wife loved to spend money still more than he, and since she was not rich on her side, she devoted herself to all kinds of villainies in order to obtain help from the mistresses of the king and from the finance department. She presented Mme. de Pompadour to the court for that purpose, and devoted herself to still more unworthy services. A determined friend, a dangerous enemy, clever in repartee and a libertine intriguer, she lost all public consideration.

Being exhausted once by fatigue at a ball at the carnival in the year 1745 and not being able to obtain a seat she conceived the idea of taking off her mask in order to succeed. The whole masked row of seats refused it to her. "I am the Princess of Conti!" she shouted; but she was no more fortunate for that. "We do not know you," replied a whole bench. "You are then people of very bad company!" replied the princess. "Yes, this company is so bad that it cannot be hurt any further."

While the Princess de Conti lived very freely with her lovers and trafficked with the mistresses and the ministers, the Prince de Conti enjoyed a renown which many actions in Italy and some in Germany had brought to him. He was studious, learned, a lover of arts and attached to the parliamentary party which believed in limiting the absolute power of our monarchs; but though attached to those maxims which repress the injustice of military power, and equalize it by the right of remonstrance and supplication, he was yet in want of that abstract love of justice which a prince as well as the least fortunate of common citizens, should possess. We give here an example.

Mlle. Durancy was actress of the Comédie Française known as having the best of health and one of the most pleasing temperaments. The exhausted prince imagined that he could renew his youth with her, sent her his most able Mercury to declared that the Prince de Conti was in love with her and ardently desired her favors. Mlle. Durancy, who lived in a modest apartment, made objections and said among other things that her apartment was too simply furnished to receive monseigneur. "If the furniture," answered the Mercury, "is the only obstacle, you shall have to-morrow other furniture;" and he ordered immediately at the prince's upholsterers a magnificent bed with fringes.

The Prince de Conti having attached himself some time afterwards to Mlle. Pelain, the upholsterer went to Mlle. Durancy to ask payment for his furniture. "My God," was her only response and she hastened to the Prince de Conti. She threatened that she would dishonor him if he did not pay the debt. The prince paid for the fringes and the furniture but he did not court her any longer.

All the princes scandalized the people by their debauchery, and nearly all had been the most audacious corrupters of the nation. In order to re-establish the former good customs it would have been necessary to choose the legislators and the administrators of the government from among *la petite bourgeoisie* which still gave some attention to decency and good manners.

The Prince de Conti, his father, crippled, hump-backed and chicken-breasted, had been a very debauched man. Having learned one day of the intrigues of his wife (Elizabeth de Condé) with the Marquis de Clermont, he made a scandal, took the latter's position from him and gave it to the Marquis de Richelieu. The Marquis de Clermont was succeeded by the Marquis de la Fare, captain of the guards of the Duke of Orléans whom the Princess de Conti called her "poupart."

La Fare was followed by the Prince de Soubise who was followed by the Marquis de Richelieu : and this time, as the Prince de Conti found himself betrayed both by his wife and by his own favorite, whom he had substituted for Clermont, he made such a great commotion that it amused the whole capital.

Mme. de Conti, the mother, seeing herself made the object of public laughter by the man who should have been the first to keep silent, resolved to revenge herself. She assured her husband unceasingly that she loved only him, and he, in order to convict her, employed spies and had recourse to frequent and sudden visits, even going so far as to visit her in her bed at night, a circumstance which often threw her into the most terrible embarrassments. In order to end this inquisition, the princess made use one day of a singular stratagem.

She had trained a big mastiff to sleep under her bed and to defend its approaches when she should wish it, and even to bite any one who should dare to come near. One evening in order to tempt the prince, her husband, who slept on the floor below hers, she made so much noise that he went up to see his wife, believing this time that he would certainly find her faithless.

Arriving very much excited he hunted with a drawn sword in his hand in all the corners of the chamber and under the bed, believing that he had really surprised his wife with another. The princess, who had prepared her trick well, let the dog loose and he tore the prince's hand. A great quarrel ensued between the husband and wife as she wished to save the life of her dog.

Tormented in different ways the Princess of Conti was finally obliged to go to a convent. She had taken a terrible disease from her husband, the prince, but she was reconciled to him at the marriage of Louis, hoping in vain to be made superintendent of the queen's household. She always received the Marquis de Richelieu at her house, and acknowledged openly her love for him after the death of her husband. The Prince de Conti died from the consequences of his debauchery in the year 1727 at the age of thirty-two.

Pleasure and etiquette were the great passions of the time; the beautiful Mme. de Montbazon, in the year 1744 having failed in etiquette towards the princess, received from the king an order to present her excuses, and in order not to fail in the expressions which were judged right and proper to a princess of the blood, she was told to write them upon her fan and read them. The princess, in order to enjoy the humiliation of Mme. de Montbazon, invited all the nobles which she could assemble to her house. Unfortunately Mme. de Montbazon forgot to begin with the word "Madame." "You do not give me my rank," said the princess; "when one speaks to a person of my rank one begins always with the word *Madame*. Begin again your excuses."

The house de Condé was no better off. The duke was no longer alive, but the duchess, his mother, maintained the debauchery of her time by her conduct and her writings. She had caused to be composed by Grécourt, the "*Maranzakiniana*," a famous collection of all the mischievous and idle things of the time which she had printed in 1730. She had been born with a taste for risqué witticism; therefore Louis XIV., who discouraged lowness, called her one day the "*Muse mer* . . . ." of the time. She long kept this title. The king prohibited her making songs under the penalty of being forbidden his presence.

At the death of the duke, the Count de Charolais was declared male-guardian, and Madame the Duchess, the younger, female-guardian of the Prince de Condé who was still living in the year 1792. Charolais showed affection for this child, paid the debts of his father, increased the fortune of the son, and put his finances in splendid order. He was forgiven by the court and the public for the bloody deeds of his youth, and if fidelity to history demands that those be published, the same fidelity demands equally that his character which was developed later should also be shown. Charolais in his later life had great self-respect even at the Court of France in presence of the monarch. It is known that Coigny served the king at Choisy by fulfilling the duties of his office; in his absence, Filleul, janitor of the castle and often the confidant of the pleasures of the king, fulfilled this duty. The Count de Charolais having presented himself one day to the king, Filleul offered him his place; Charolais eyed him with scorn and refused the honor.

The Duke of Orléans who turned his back on the world and abandoned everything to his son, reserved to himself one million a year which he could distribute to the poor, and resided at the Abbey Sainte-Geneviève at a charge of one louis a day for himself and a little footman whom he had kept. Later he had a cook without augmenting his expenses. In order to understand the Septuagint well and explain the enigmas of Scripture, he studied Greek, Syriac, Hebrew and Chaldaic. He read the enormous volumes of the commentators on the Bible which one can see at the library of Sainte-Geneviève, and wrote volumes in folio of similar commentaries. A verse of a psalm occupied him often for months and inspired him with a dissertation of a hundred pages; he left by will more than a thousand of these papers to the Dominicans. In short he had became such a great saint that Jomard, priest of Versailles, who was his confessor, thought best to publish his confessions, stating that he never had found him guilty of one venial sin, and that he had never in two consecutive confessions confessed the same imperfection. We must not forget that theologians distinguish carefully between mortal sins which bring one to damnation, venial sins which lead to purgatory, and imperfections for which one has only to pass easily over the fire.

The Duke of Orléans had made in 1750 a testament of one hundred and fifty pages. He left to Sainte-Geneviève his medals and engraved stones, of which the Abbé le Blond and the Abbé Lachaux have given such a beautiful description, but the children of the prince got them back. He left to Silhouette, his chancellor, ten thousand livres of income, and wished his body to be opened by the anatomists in order that they might experiment with it, to say nothing of his head which might be an excellent study. When dying he declared that he had held the belief of the Jacobins and that he was a disciple of Saint Thomas of Aquina. This proved great courage, on account of the authority of the prevailing opinions of the Jesuits, who had in France opposed their Spanish theologian, Molina, to Thomas of Aquina. The Duke of Orléans died as he had lived. The regent who had declared that he would always be an honest man, tried to interest him in women hoping to liberalize his mind; but they never could succeed in making him either sensual or frivolous.

His son born in the year 1725 was in no hurry even in 1743 to marry. The governor Ballero, who dominated him as he had dominated the Duke of Orléans was not anxious for him to marry; he feared that the Princess de Conti, in giving her daughter to the Duke de Chartres would drive him out in order to take his place in the Palais-Royal and succeed to his influence. The duchess desired besides to marry the Duke de Chartres to his cousin, Mlle. de Modène, for whom she felt friendship, rather than to Mlle. de Conti.

The Princess de Conti in order to facilitate the project took her daughter with her, and in order to please the Duchess of Orléans gave her a pious and modest education, not leaving her out of sight one moment; so careful was she that even if the mother were taking supper outside she left the company for a few moments or even her part in a game to see that her daughter was in bed by eight o'clock. Mme. de Conti by the same kind attentions and all sorts of expressions of friendship won

Balleroy to lend himself to further this marriage, and made him understand that she would uphold him in her house; for if he was little liked by Mme. of Orléans, he could not hold his position if the Duchess of Modena, her daughter, should command there. Balleroy influenced both father and son in favor of the marriage, and took advantage of the moment to send the Duke of Orléans to the castle of Conti to ask for the princess.

The Conti and the Orléans did not frequent one another's houses and the Duke of Orléans presenting himself at the home of the princess she was very much astonished and asked him what accident brought him there. "To demand your daughter in marriage," replied the Duke of Orléans. "And with whom?" replied the Princess de Conti. "With my son the Duke de Chartres." The same day he gave the news to Madame of Orléans and went to take the orders of the king.

This marriage having been made against the will of the Duchess of Orléans she showed her dissatisfaction with it to her grandson and his wife, whom she derisively called her "belle-fille" she did not make them any present and there was no supper in the Palais-Royal on the evening of the return from Versailles where the marriage was celebrated according to the etiquette of the time.

The Duke de Chartres was at the beginning of this marriage and during several years devotedly in love with his wife, and the city and the court occupied themselves continually with anecdotes referring to their happiness. Any place under the sun where they found themselves alone, carriages, gardens, meadows, boudoirs of the friends to whom they paid a visit, a common room, if there were no boudoir, anything was agreeable to renew their demonstrations of love. Often a duchess whom they went to see and whom they did not find at home, found them in her bed. Calumny attacked them at a time when they were still devotedly in love with each other, and this love was such, that in 1745, at a time when the Duke de Chartres went to the war in Germany the Duchess de Chartres being then enceinte six months wished to follow him to the camp.

The Duke de Chartres was an honest man, a good prince, liberal, noble. He loved the hunt and was honest in his pleasures. The Duchess of Chartres, who had, under the guidance of her mother, studied hypocrisy in order to marry him, shortly had a quarrel with him in order to follow her evil inclinations; she was without shame, without religion, set in her fast life and held only scandalous conversations.

There had been since the beginning of this century a rivalry between the royal house of Spain and that of the Duke of Orléans, on account of the succession to the crown, which would have been decided by war, if occasion had offered. The views of Spain regarding the throne of France were the same in 1750 as in other times, and the court of Madrid did not cease to watch the behavior of the house of Orléans. The dauphin, father of Louis XVI., had smallpox in the year 1750; it was believed that he would die, and Spain prepared herself to sustain her ancient pretensions. The royal house of Spain never lost from sight the ancient cradle of its ancestors; it did not cease looking towards France until the birth of the Count of Provence, brother of Louis XVI. Several princes then sustaining the male heredity of the throne in the family of Louis XV., the underhand and disquieting rivalry of the two houses apparently came to an end, only to reappear in the *Assemblée constituante* which refused to give any judgment about the great question.

CHAPTER LXXI.

Continuation of anecdotes relating to Louis XV.—His love of play.—His private treasury.—The etiquette of the court.—Subjection to the charges that were brought.—Tasting of food before eating.—Interior of the apartments of the queen.—His society.—His devotion.—Character of his devotion.—Style of his letters.—Character of the princesses, his daughters.—Madame Adelaide.—Anecdote concerning a rude book.

THE king, who did not love learned men very much, and who detested philosophers, had, however, printed the works of Dr. Quesnay on psychology and those about the administration of Sully. He had them printed under his own eyes at Versailles, and he wished to honor the edition by drawing proofs of some sheets himself. He called this doctor "the thinker," he was one of the first to recognize that he would be the founder of a society of friends of the human race, of which the principles, the works and the investigations were to have a great influence and lead to a revolution in France.

The king, who raised Quesnay to the nobility, made him his consulting physician and wished him to carry on his coat-of-arms three pansies, with the motto "*Propter mentis cogitationem.*" This is a well authenticated anecdote of the deceased king in favor of the sciences. He understood much more about hunting, playing and cooking. He had until 1742, the famous Mouthier as cook of the little apartments, who learned from the most experienced physicians of his time, the art of preparing dishes that would refresh him after his debauches. During the carnival the king, the Duke of Orléans, the princes, and the favorites were disguised as Spaniards or as old Frenchmen from the time of Francis the first to Henry IV. The king drank champagne, gambled high, liked to win and to take all the profits. He lost much towards the middle of the century, often four and five thousand louis at a sitting; and he formed the habit of repairing his loss by taking from the royal treasury.

The courtiers were obliged to risk their fortunes in these scandalous games. Livry won from him in Marly in the month of May three thousand livres at one sitting.

When one sees kings subjected to all the passions of men who live a private life without having their freedom one is obliged to say with Mme. de Sabran that one must not be surprised that they are "a peculiar kind of men."

The queen perceived one day while walking in her room that there was dust upon the counterpane of her bed of state, and showed it to Mme. de Luynes.

Mme. de Luynes sent for the valet-de-chambre upholsterer of the queen, who was in service, in order to have it shown to the valet-de-chambre upholsterer of the king. The latter was very sorry but the dust did not concern him. He said that the upholsterers make, to be sure, the bed of the queen, but that they can not touch the bed of state, which passes as furniture when the queen is not sleeping in it, and in this case could only concern the officers of the garde-meuble. Two full days were lost in trying to find the one who should by his office take off the dust.

The service of "tasting the food" was more serious. There were in the year 1745 five gentlemen serving at every great banquet, one of whom stood near the king and ordered in his presence the "tasting" by an officer of the mouth. He ordered also the tasting of the fruits, ices, etc.; and all the officers who were charged to do so were obliged to taste of everything which they had prepared. They dipped sippets into the stews and into the other dishes which were to be served to the king, and all these officers were obliged to eat before the serving gentleman. Two other gentlemen put the plates upon the table, a third gave drink to the king, and drank a swallow of the water, and one of the wine, and rinsed out the glass of the king in a great cup which was divided between them. The chief of the goblet drank first and the serving gentlemen after him. After the tasting, the latter gave back his cup to the chief of the goblet who presented the saucer to the king.

There were annoyances of another kind in the life of the king. That of being allowed only to enjoy the society of certain persons, who had the right by the titles which they bore, was not the smallest. Never a man "*du commun*," according to the expressions of the courtiers, was allowed to approach the king by the door. Hidden doors and secret stairs were the only modes of entrance for men of the common people whom the king wished to see. It was hardly allowable for a man of genius to present the prince with a book which had made his reign illustrious and procured great celebrity to the nation over which he ruled.

This annoyance was the principal cause of the journeys to Choisy, which were so costly and so frequent, where the king ceased in many ways to be a monarch and received only his mistresses, gay women or favorites; the ministers were considered intruders there, were always kept away, and could not appear without special orders.

There was given to the queen the castle of Trianon as a country house, and it was for the purpose of being at her ease that she went there often to dine with her ladies. One day a serious quarrel between the lady fruiterer and the governor of the castle interrupted these feasts and kept her from taking supper there for two years. The fruiterer claimed, against the opinion of the governor, that she had to furnish the candles; the governor wanted to preserve to himself this right. So, in order not to offend anybody, the queen did not take her supper there. There was noticed in the deceased king * and in his wife much condescension and kindness for the inferiors to whom they were accustomed. The humane sentiments of the king and his wife increased in proportion as they descended to those who were the least important in their service.

While the king took his pleasures at Choisy, the queen was never more at her ease than when, retired to her own rooms, she was surrounded by the duke, the cardinal, and the Duchess de Luynes. In the same way that her

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* Note of Tr. This book was written after Louis XV's death.

husband said sometimes at Choisy that he was no more king, she said that she was no more queen. President Hénault and Father Griffet were of their company. Everybody took seats there but the conversation was not noisy. Entire hours of dull silence, as is the custom with Englishmen, where the sleepiness of the whole company indicated the tranquillity of the queen's select company, was the general rule. One day the good Cardinal de Luynes, who had fallen asleep, took up the conversation when he awoke saying that it was necessary to assemble the chapter. A few days afterwards the queen wrote to the cardinal:—

"Be well convinced, Monseigneur de Bayeux, that I am not more a queen when you are in your diocese than when we have you in Versailles. This idea will make you feel the pleasure which the king has had the grace to accord to you and Mme. de Luynes. You will see there nobody but a lady friend, who takes an interest in everything that regards her. I am glad of my good fortune in receiving thanks for a thing which has made me more pleasure than yourself. After that, Monseigneur, I ask your benediction, and that you refresh your memory, in order to prevent you from going to the chapter, when you are here; for, though you are always very amiable, you are still more so when you do not sleep with Tintamare. I count very much upon you in writing you these foolish things."

This Tintamare was a Duke de Luynes, who also used to go to sleep in the rooms of the queen; they called him so on account of his great tranquillity of mind. The kindness of the queen is well shown in this letter to the Cardinal de Luynes. Here follows a letter to the Duchess de Luynes:—

"I was very ill yesterday; I had pains in the stomach, and on account of it terrible hysterics. I feel better, but I am not cured. I see very well that President Hénault does not know me yet; I must indeed be in agony when I look sad with such amiable people; but this does not indicate anything regarding my health; for I have often passed very bad nights when I appeared quite well so long as I was with you."

But free as the queen was with her friends, she trembled before the king, especially when she asked him some favor. Having obtained a situation for Mme. la Motte, whom she esteemed, she wanted to kiss the hand of the king; the prince kissed her this time, adding that he invited her to the first piece that should be played; and he said to her that, if she had not been invited to the others, it was on account of the exaggerated freedom which pervaded them and which would perhaps have scandalized her. Indeed the queen, being governed by the Jesuits, held in horror the opinions and the habits against which the Jesuits fought. She was prejudiced against Voltaire. Every time when he published a book, she was told that it had been written either against the established authorities or against religion. She was worked upon often to such a degree that she threw herself at the feet of the king to beg him to maintain his religion, and she had the weakness to serve in this respect the passions of her confessors who were leading her. Thus it remained for the Jesuits, who did not govern the king any longer through the confessional, to torment the conscience of the queen and of the old ladies of the court.

The queen, since she had been in France, had always desired to confess in the Polish language, and the Jesuits for fear of losing their confessional, kept always in their house of the rue Saint-Antoine, Jesuits of that nationality, in order not to lose their penitent. Father Radominsky having died (1756), another Pole, who was ready for the position, succeeded him. The Jesuits made especial use of the medium of the queen to prevent the representation of theatrical plays at the court, in which any of the new ideas appeared. When there was a rumor that there would be played at the court *l'Orphelin de la Chine*, she went to see the king and begged him not to countenance bad representations; she told him that there were some suspicious places in it concerning religion and independence. An hour afterwards the king sent M. de Saint-Florentin to her, asking her to command what she wished to have left out. She said that she had not read the play and that all she wanted was that there be taken out anything that would be likely to be ambiguous concerning religion and the authority of the king. She spoke to him the following morning supplicating him to accede to her wish.

Louis XV. joined, as Louis XIV. did to the scandalous life of a debauchee, the piety of a King of France. He who was tender-hearted at the mass, and debauched in his little apartments, who considered the Christian religion a means to govern his states and an essential ornament for the monarchy, constantly manifested, as did his wife, a stern hatred of the new philosophers. With such principles, stupidity could be very easily maintained at the Court of France; and if the son of Henry IV. was a cold fanatic; if he had for successor another monarch who associated sacerdotal tyranny with religion, Louis XV. also had children, who while inheriting the political principles of the Bourbons, concerning religion, which they did not practice, still sustained the edifice of worship and respected its exterior appearances. We now show how the daughters of the king were brought up; they will speak for themselves in the letters which follow addressed to their mother:—

"I have been this morning to the Carmelites, my dear Mamma; they could not have the Masses read, as you asked of me, but they have prayed well and accordingly you have had good weather. I have been very much afraid to-day that we should have a thunder-storm, but there has been none. Adieu, my dear Mamma; I flatter myself that you do not doubt of my tenderness, which is so great that I can not tell you.

"MARIE-ADELAIDE."

"My Dear Mamma, we just arrived; I am all mixed up and very giddy headed. I am very impatient to be with you to-morrow in order to have the pleasure of seeing you. I hope that you are well convinced of this, as well as of my tender friendship and my respect.

"VICTOIRE."

"My Dear Mamma, we have been this morning to the

Carmelites: they have prayed to God for you, that nothing may happen to you on the road. I am very impatient to arrive at Versailles; for I assure you that it concerns me very much not to see you, since I love you, my dear Mamma, with all my heart. Be convinced of this I beg of you.

"SOPHIE."

"With much eagerness, my dear Mamma, I hasten to assure you of my tender attachment; we have just arrived at this moment. The king broke a great-wheel of his carriage which they were obliged to mend, but no accident occurred. I have performed, my dear Mamma, your orders for the Abbess de Royal-Lieu. She was filled with thanks but very sorry not to have seen you more; she hopes to be more fortunate next year. She begged me to place her at your feet; I beg of you to receive me there with her, and to be convinced that nobody loves you more tenderly than I.

"LOUISE-MARIE."

Documents of Justification.

Documents relative to the quarrel of the dukes and the peers with parliament.

"PARLIAMENT said in its memorial that Géraud Bastet, an apothecary of Viviers, was an ancestor of the Dukes of Crussol and was created a nobleman in 1304 by the Bishop of Valence.

"Nicholas de La Trémoille was ennobled by Charles V. in 1377.

"Maximillian de Béthune was considered a worthless man, and was a descendant of an adventurer.

"The De Luynes were descended from a lawyer of Mornas.

"Cossé-Brissac was an illustrious character but was new to the nobility.

"As for Vignerot (de Richelieu) Monsieurs the presidents said that he had been a domestic and a lute player in the home of Cardinal de Richelieu. They added moreover, that he had so adroitly served the cardinal that Richelieu consented to give him his sister in marriage, who had become passionately fond of Vignerot.

"The Duc de Saint-Simon is a noble who lived so recently and whose fortune was so suddenly acquired that every one will remember concerning him. One of his cousins was squire of Mme. de Schomberg. The resemlance of the coat-of-arms of La Vaquerie which this family displays with that of the Vermandois has given rise to a supposition that this family is descended from a princess of that house. The vanity of this little duke is so pronounced that in his genealogy he asserts that his house is descended from Bossu, a bourgeois judge of Mayenne, called *Le Bossu*, a man who married the heiress of the elder branch of his house.

"George Vert from the interior of his butcher's stall would be very much surprised to behold in himself the father of the numerous members of the house of La Rochefoucauld, Roussi, etc.

"The Neuville-Villeroys are descended from a fish merchant, who was at one time chief cook of France. His son was a clerk of the Hotel de Ville, a provost merchant and father of Nicholas de Neuville who was crier (usher) of the court and secretary of state. Marshal de Villeroy finds it hard to become reconciled to the fact that he is of such poor extraction.

"The d'Estrées have belonged to the nobility only two hundred and fifty years. Cardinal d'Estrées after many efforts was unable to discover any noble ancestor prior to that time.

"The Boulainvilliers, Boufflers and Lauzun were unknown five hundred years ago, except in the immediate environs of their little villages.

"The Grammonts determined upon their coat-of-arms and displayed it in the house d'Aure. The Count de Grammont one day asked the marshal what coat-of-arms he would wear that year. They owe their first promotion to Corisande Dandouin, their grandmother, mistress of Henry IV., then to the alliance of the marshal with Cardinal de Richelieu.

"The Noailles are descended from a servant of Pierre Roger, Count de Beaufort, Vicount de Turenne, who ennobled them and converted a small corner of the estates of Noailles into a fief, whence they took their name. The Montmorins reserve its title yet and during their quarrel with the Duc du Bouillon they refused to give it to him. De Noailles, Bishop d'Acqs, acquired from the Lignerates a portion of the estates of Noailles. In 1556 and 1569, they bought the rest including the chateau.

"The family of Montmorin preserves to this day the tapestry on which a Noailles is represented as distributing the plates at table as a servant. The lineage of this proud and arrogant family was to say the least, an humble one.

"Charles de La Porte, Marshal de La Meilleraye and father of the late Duke de Mazarin, was the son of a famous lawyer of parliament, whose father was an apothecary at Parthenai. This marshall who was a cousin of Cardinal de Richelieu afterwards endowed him with his fortune.

"The Duc d'Harcourt is descended from an illegitimate son of the Bishop of Bayeux. John d'Harcourt Beuvron was vicount or judge of Caen in 1554. His son was one of the small children of the bourgeoisie chosen to scatter flowers before Henry IV. at the time of his entry into that city, as the book of the Antiquités de Caen says.

"The Duc d'Epernon Rouillac, the great genealogist, acquaints us with the fact that the Pardaillans (the true name of the Ducs d'Epernon who are now extinct) Montespan are descended from the illegitimate son of a canon of Lectoure in Gascony.

"Cantien de Villars was a clerk of the court of Condrieux in 1486, as was his father, whose name was Claude de Villars. His nephew profited by the letters of nobility which he had procured, and after obtaining lands, was reinstated the 16th of February, 1586.

"The Potiers, Ducs de Gesvres and De Trêmes are members of parliament, but do not belong to the best families.

"Other families have possessed offices in parliament; one Jean de Mailly was councilor in the court under Charles VI.

"Such is the extraction, monseigneur," said parliament, "of a large number of the peers of the realm; but among these and among others, whose names we have not mentioned, not one is exempt from the alliance with the magistracy, and very frequently they have made marriage alliances with the most ignoble of the magistracy; for we do not attempt to conceal the fact that there are several classes amongst us, which we distinguish *par la grande, la noyenne et la basse robe.*"

"Nevertheless, these are the people who compare themselves to the Ducs de Bourgogne, De Guienne and De Normondie; to the Counts de Flandre, De Champagne and De Toulouse. These are the people who are conspiring to have the legitimated princes of the blood in the rank of their peerage; who, not contenting themselves with treating parliament with scorn, wish to make peers follow in their retinue, demand the title of *Monseigneur* in their letters, refuse to extend the hand to us in their homes, and who obtain distinctions unheard of up to the present time, and dispense with measuring swords with gentlemen! These are the people who, forgetting that they are a part of parliament, dare to dispute that the third estate is the most august company of the realm."

This memorial, addressed to the Court at Paris, created such a sensation that the dukes mentioned therein were thereafter called by the names given them in the memorial, as a constant reminder of their humble, if not ignoble origin. The whole peerage assembled in the Hotel of Crussol in reply to this Memorial, which the angry populace caused to be published broadcast. They pronounced it infamous.

The peers had their archives thoroughly searched in order to find their titles, and each one brought his old documents there that they might present to one another their proofs.

REPLY TO THE INJURIOUS LIBEL WHICH ASSAILS THE HOUSES OF THE DUKES AND PEERS.

"Some time ago there was published a Memorial filled with so many false statements in regard to the state and nobility, so many insinuations and atrocious insults against the most select order in the realm next to the royal family, that it can only be regarded as a scandalous and most defamitory libel, and throughout which, in spite of its choice and even eloquent language, we can see evidences of terrible malice and gross ignorance.

"The author of this Memorial attempts to prove that the nobility of the sword and the nobility of the magistracy are of equal importance; this, in itself, reveals the fact that he is absolutely ignorant of the true principles of the nobility, for ever since nobles have existed no comparison has ever been drawn between the nobility of the magistracy and that of the sword, and the latter has always been regarded as the original of a beautiful picture. No copy has ever done it justice. Ignorance alone could lead one to attempt such a comparison. The same is true of the author, who says that the nobility of the magistracy has the same rights and prerogatives as that of the army.

"Such a great mistake convinces us that he did not consult the chapters of Strasborg, of Saint-Jean de Lyons, d'Auch, De Broude, De Saint-Pierre De Mâcon and several others. The nobility of the magistracy is incapable of attaining the dignities of the chevaliers of the Order of Holy Ghost.

"One may well be surprised at the boldness with which this author claims that there are in parliament a great number of families superior in fame and illustriousness to the majority of the peers.

"The first of these great families which he attacks is Crussol. It would be honoring him too much to reply seriously to these vagaries. What is there in common between Jean Bastet, an apothecary in the city of Viviers in the year 1300, and the illustrious House of

Crussol, prominent as early as the year 1000, through their lords of Crussol and their knights bannerets?

"The House of La Trémoille, allied to the families of France, of Aragon of Masson, of Hesse-Cassel, Danemark, Oldenbourg, and others, takes its origin from Peter, Sire of La Trémoille in Poitou, living in the year 1040. We refer the author to the testimony of Sainte-Marthe.

"The derogatory remarks made by Marshall de Tavannes in his Memoirs are but the result of his antipathy and jealousy of M. de Sully, and do not prove that there was no family of Béthune, as Andre Deuchêne shows us in his genealogical history. Finally, the very illustrious House of Melun from which came the mother of the first Duc de Sully, proves in an irrefutable way that he was known as a man of rank.

"We must acquaint the author, since he does not seem to know it, with the fact that Honoré d'Albert, the Lord de Luynes whom he calls a lawyer was chevalier of the Order of the King, governor of Beauvais, descendant of Thomas d'Albert, page, bailif of Vivarais in 1454 and a descendant of a house known from the times of Saint Louis, and established under King Jean. The founder of this family is Count d'Albert of Florence, from whose family Pope Innocent VI. was descended.

"This author tries to find contradictions where none exist. He says that the family De Cossé claims to originate from Maine and that it claims Italy as its birth place. He did not understand that this family Du Maine is one and the same with that of Italy, whence it took its origin. No better proof of his ignorance can be given than his assertion that the family De Cossé is not of ancient origin.

"What is said against Duc de Richelieu is, in itself, evidence of the stupendous knavery of the author, and shows plainly that he had no other object in writing his memorial than that of insulting the most respectable personages.

"To prove this, all we need to do is to examine some of his dates. He says that René de Vignerot, grandfather of the Duc de Richelieu, was a domestic and a lute player of the Cardinal de Richelieu, and that he served him so faithfully in contributing to his pleasures, that the cardinal married him to his sister and that afterwards he entailed his Duchy of Richelieu to him. But all these insults defeat their own object, when we observe that the House of Vignerot originates from the very ancient English family, founded in France in the year 1430, during the reign of Charles VII. in the person of Vignerot, Lord Peter de Courlay, fifth ancestor of René de Vignerot, Chamberlain of Henry IV. who died in 1626 and who married François Duplessis-Richelieu, who died in 1615, and who was formerly the widow of Jean de Beaufais. History tells us that Cardinal de Richelieu was not minister of state until after the death of the Constable de Luynes, which took place at the Siege of Montabun in 1621; that he was created cardinal in 1622, and that by his will (made in the year 1642), he entailed his Duchy of Richelieu to Armand-Jean de Vignerot, his grand nephew, and grandson of René de Vignerot. The mother of this René was René de La Forest de Baurepaire, who died before François de Vignerot, her husband, which rendered it impossible for her to be remarried to an artisan as was insultingly stated.

"We have at court very few families as ancient as that of Saint-Simon, which is descended from Olivier de Rouvroy, a knight living in 1060 under Henry I. Jean de Rouvroy, knight-banneret followed Philip Augustus to the conquest of England by Normandy in 1202. Four descendants were Viceroys of Navarre.

"During the year 1334, Matthieu de Rouvroy married Margueritte of Saint-Simon, heiress of this illustrious house and destined to bear the names and the arms of Saint-Simon. This house is connected with the imperial family of Charlemagne through the Counts de Vermandois and the Kings of Italy. It is supposed, though not actually known, that Charles, Marquis of Saint-Simon, was a squire of the Marshal of France. Certain it is, however, that he was during his life a marshall, a colonel of the Regiment of Navarre and governor of Senlis, that he married Louise de Crussol before his brother was duke, and that he died a wearer of the Cordon-Bleu.

"It is not the first time that rash and ill-advised calumniators have had the impudence to invent stories as unworthy as this one, which was aimed against the House of La Rochefoucauld. For several embittered writers and calumniators have had the effrontery to write a similar injurious diatribe against this most august and most ancient of French families. The family of La

Rochefoucauld takes its origin from Foucault, Lord of La Roche in the year 1026. He was a son d'Amaury de Lusignan, Lord of La Roche, who was the grandson of Guillaume, Duke of Acquitaine and Count of Poitou a descendant of the former Counts of Autun, of royal lineage.

"What he disparagingly says of the House of Villeroy is a tissue of falsehoods, just as counterfeit and insulting. And what shows us the vile brazenness of the author is that he dares to attack a person as respectable as the illustrious chief of this house. If there were a chief cook of Francis I. and a clerk of the Hotel de Ville bearing the name De Neuville, we cannot draw any inference from this resemblance of names, as there is nothing in common between them and the ancestors of the House of Villeroy. If the author had consulted the registers of Hotel de Ville of Paris, he would not have found a provost by the name of Neuville, as there was never one of that name. But we can easily see how he confounds everything. He meant to speak of Nicolas Le Gendre, Seigneur de Villeroy, Provo of Merchants in the year 1576, and afterwards chevalier of the Order of the King. This latter rank was given to him in the records published by the custom house of Paris on the 22d of February, 1580, and his sister was Angelique Le Gendre, who had Villeroy blood in her veins, having married one of the ancestors of the House of Neuville-Villeroy, which inherited the rest of the estates through the death of Nicolas Le Gendre without children.

"Moreover, let us inform the author that he is entirely ignorant of the origin of the Villeroy family, for it descends from the younger son of the illustrious House of Neuville in Flanders, which originated about the end of the fifteenth century, and was established in France after the death of Charles, the last duke of Bourgogne. This family furnished two deans of the Marshals of France, and several provincial governors. It has engaged in marriage alliances with some of the greatest families of the realm. Such was that of Nicolas de Neuville, Duke de Villeroy, peer and Marshal of France, who married in 1617 Madeleine de Créqui. Such also is the alliance of M. le Marshal of to-day, whose wife was Marie-Margueritte de Cossé-Brissac, daughter of a Gondi, great-granddaughter of a d'Orleans-Longueville, whose mother was Mary de Bourbon, Countess of Saint-Paul. Such, likewise, is that of Catherine de Neuville, daughter of the late marshall, with Louis de Lorraine, Count d'Armagnac. And it is to be noticed, also, that she still bears on her coat-of-arms three little crosses, which are part of the coat-of-arms of the House of Neuville in Flanders.

"The author says that the family d'Estrées dates back its nobility only for two hundred years, and that the late Cardinal d'Estrées, after making many efforts, could not find any trace of nobility prior to that time. In order to convince him of his mistake he has but to consult the registry of Péronne, where a record will be found, made in the month of September, 1675, at the request of M. the Cardinal, of a chapel situated near the castle of Falay, near Péronne, in which were found several ancient monuments of the twelfth century bearing the d'Estrées coat-of-arms. And it is known that the noble d'Estrées, knight banneret, won at the head of his vassal a victory over a neighboring lord with whom he was waging war. M. d'Cange, in his dissertations on the history of Saint-Louis by M. de Joinville notes that Reoul d'Estrées, Marshal of France, served under Saint-Louis in his second crusade. Among the knights who were admitted to the tournament of Anohin, near Douai, in 1096, is found the name of Hubert d'Estrées. Christine d'Estrées in 1658, married François Marie de Lorraine, Prince of Lillebonne.

"The author is not less ridiculous when he attempts to deal with the origin of the Houses of Bauvilliers, Saint-Agnan, and De Hostun, De Pallard and Du Boufflers, whom, he said, were not known outside of their own little villages. If he had consulted the history of Berry, he would have learned that the House of Bauvilliers has been very distinguished for six centuries, and that it is allied with the first families of the realm.

"The history of the dauphiné would have acquainted him with the antiquity, as well as the great marriage alliances, of the family d'Hostun. The history of the families of Piccardy tells us that Henri, Seigneur de Boufflers, lived in 1248, that William, his son, accompanied Charles of Anjou to the conquest of the kingdom of Naples and distinguished himself in the battle of Beneventum. And that Alleaume, Seigneur de Boufflers, made prisoner at the battle of Agincourt, paid five thousand pounds ransom, a very large sum at that time. The arms of this family show that it was founded at the time of the crusades.

"We know nothing about the change in the coat-of-arms in the family of Grammont, which this author speaks of, and which, moreover, decides nothing. The history of France proves the grandeur of this family.

"It is with the same malice that he attacks the House of Noailles. The fictitious story of the ennobling and creation of a fief, which he dares not even date, and of the acquisition of land by the Noailles, is worthy of pity. We know, and the titles of this family prove, that it possessed the land and the castle of Noailles from the year 1000, and has had no other name but that of Noailles.

"If the author of the Memorial does not know the House of Cambout de Coasin, it is because he never read the history of Brittany. He will see in that history that this ancient family took its name from the estate of Cambout. We cannot pass without mentioning the marriage of Margueritte de Cambout with Henri de Lorraine, Count d'Harcourt, during the reign of Louis XIII.

"The author of the Memorial says that the position of gentleman-usher which the ancestors of M. le Duc d'Aumont filled, gives an idea of the ignoble origin of that family; and that this office is no greater in rank than that of a councilor. He could not make a more pitiable comparison, for this office was, as a matter of fact, equal in dignity and function to what we call at the present time the first squire of the king. This noble, d'Aumont, who had the rank of *hussier d'armes* in 1333, became famous at the battle of Tournay in Flanders. This family originated in Hainault, where it was known as early as the year 650 through Madeleine d'Aumont, who founded at Aumont an abbey of the same name and who married Vaudrade, Countess de Hainault. The Abbey de Resson, in the diocese of Rouen, claims the Lords d'Aumont as its founder. We find Philippe d'Aumont among the knights admitted to take part in the tournament of Autun, near Douai, in 1096; another Philippe d'Aumont, surnamed the Chauve, distinguished himself at the capture of Constantinople by the Romans in 1304. Pierre d'Aumont was chamberlain of Kings Jean and Charles V. and was with Queen Jeanne of Bourbon, one of the tutors of Charles VI. Jean d'Aumont, knight banneret, was killed at the battle of Agincourt; and Jean, Sire d'Aumout, was made Marshal of France in the year 1579.

" What he says detrimental to the family of Meilleraye, and the name of Porte, is not less unfounded in fact. It is perfectly well known that this noble house is a branch of that of Porte de Vezin. There is no doubt that the relationship of Cardinal de Richelieu, a cousin germain of Marshal de Meilleraye has enhanced the greatness of this family; but we must observe that the aunt of Cardinal de Richelieu, daughter of a man who bore the Cordon-Bleu, captain of the Royal body guard, would not have married the son of a simple lawyer and the grandson of an artisan.

" The author of this Memorial falls into very ridiculous contradiction in regard to the House of Harcourt. He says that Jean d'Harcourt, Vicount of the City of Caen, in 1514, had a young son who was present and scattered flowers at the entry of King Henry IV. Doubtless he does not know that Henry IV. did not commence to rule in France until 1589 and that this young son must have been more than eight years of age. All genealogists agree that the family was the issue of a younger son of the ancient Dukes of Normandy in the thirteenth century. Robert d'Harcourt was Marshal of France; the elder branch was merged in the House of Lorraine.

"The name of Rouillac, cited by the author to prove that the House of Pardaillan de Montespan (and not Pardaillan as he wrongly calls it), descended from a canon of Lectoure, is not known. This insult is worthy of pity. The name of this family is Gondrin, a name as illustrious as it is ancient. The family in Spain and that of Pardaillan have been honored by great marriage alliances and have been associated with the name of Gondrin.

"The House of Villars dates from the lords of Villars, on the frontier of Dauphiné and is several centuries old. Ancient monuments on which the arms of this house are inscribed attest its antiquity.

"If the author of the Memorial found in Brantôme that the Constable de Bourbon had a valet-de-chambre, by the name of Goyon, this resemblance in name has no relation whatever to the House of Monstespan, allied with the royal family and descended from the illustrious House of Goyon in Brittany.

"It is agreed that Louis Pathier, Baron de Gesvres, secretary of state, who founded the branch of the Dukes de Gesvres, was a son of a councilor in parliament under Charles IX., but this family has been famous in the nobility since the secretary of state who married a granddaughter of Catherine de Montmorency, a lady of Tresmes, and whose eldest son, René Pothier, Duke de

Tresmes, married Madeleine du Luxembourg, daughter of François du Luxembourg, Duke de Piniey, and of Diane of Lorraine. These great family alliances have rendered the House of Pothier worthy of the title of duke and peer, which the simple name of Pothier could not have secured for it. One of the least of its honors is that it was descended from the Pothiers de Blancmesnil and De Novion, while on the other hand, it is a great distinction for them to have a branch of their family honored with the title of duke and peer of France.

" If there were a councilor in parliament under Charles VI. called Jean de Mailly, he did not belong to this great family. Nicolas de Mailly was admiral of the fleet that went to the crusade in the year 1204. Gilles de Mailly served under Saint-Louis in Palestine. This house is allied with the royal family.

" The author of the Memorial says that the Clermont-Tonnerres were only councilors of the Dauphin de Viennois. This house was known as early as the year 1060, through Aymar, Lord of Clermont; Humbert Dauphin, created the office of *premier conseillerné et chef des guerres delphinales*, in favor of the nobles of this house. The reinstatement of Pope Calixtus II., in 1119, by the valor of Aymar de Clermont, resulting in the gift of the keys of St. Peter with the Tiara for a crest by this pope, in place of the ancient coat-of-arms of this house, are facts known by every one. The name of Chatte is only that of a noble line by which a younger branch of the family was distinguished. The late M. Bishop de Noyon who died 1702, whose preciseness was well known, recognized this branch."

END OF VOLUME II.

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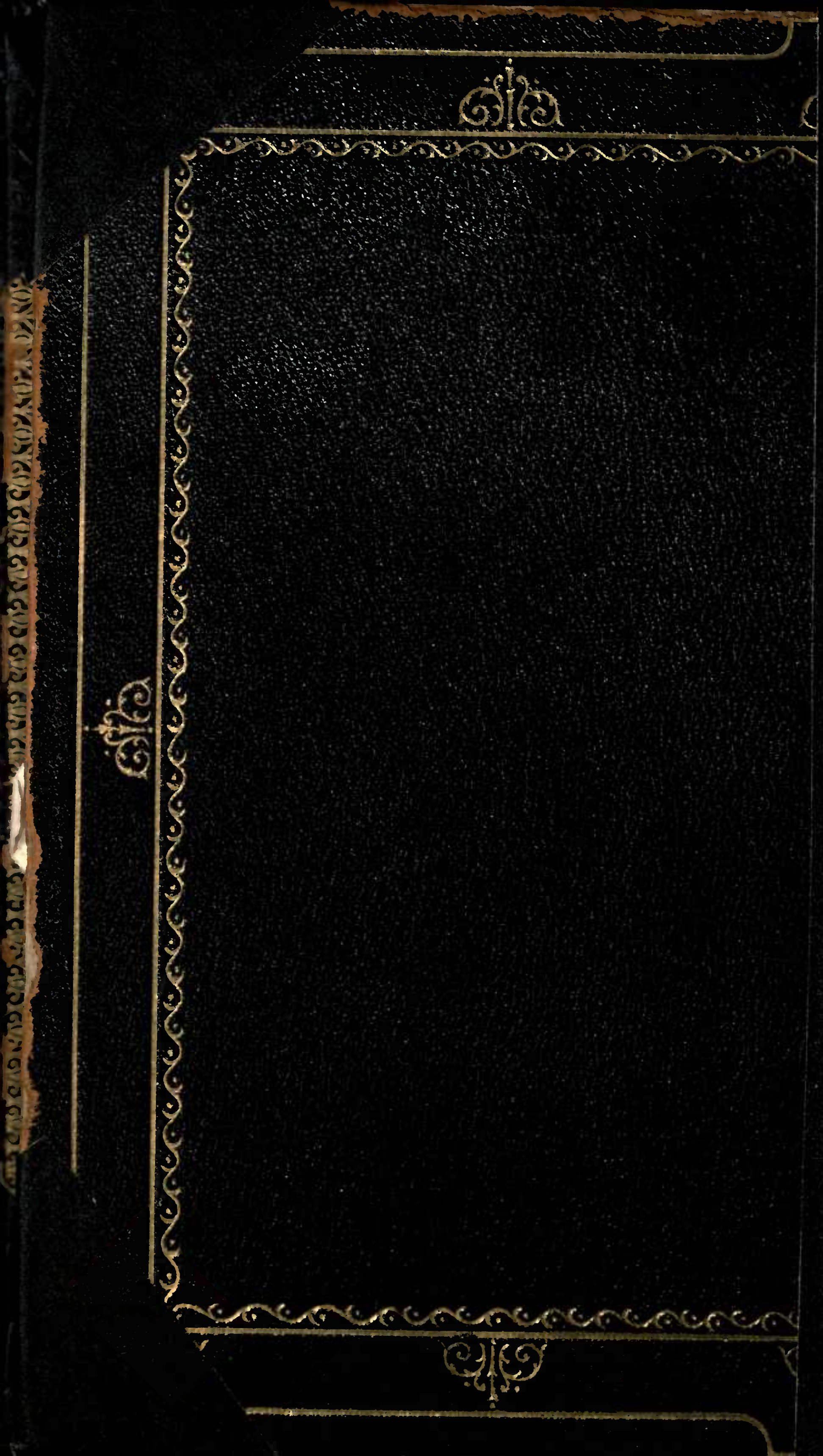

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